

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

U.S. youth visiting Cuba meet revolutionary social workers

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 67/NO. 29 AUGUST 25, 2003

N. Carolina textile giant closes, 7,500 out of a job

BY LOUIS TURNER

KANNAPOLIS, North Carolina—Pillowtex Corp., one of the largest U.S. textile manufacturers, announced July 30 that it was closing 16 plants in the United States and Canada. The closures will throw more than 7,500 workers onto the rolls of the unemployed. The textile giant filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy and plans to liquidate all its assets.

Pillowtex, known for the brand names Fieldcrest Cannon and Royal Velvet, filed for bankruptcy in 2001. At that time, it closed several mills and laid off thousands of workers. Leading up to its emergence from bankruptcy protection in May 2002, the bosses carried out a reorganization that forced fewer workers to produce the same number of commodities and for lower wages. Company executives claim that from that time until its current liquidation Pillowtex lost \$29 million.

For several months Pillowtex was actively seeking buyers and negotiated with several of them, including many rivals. During this period, workers suffered short weeks and multiple layoffs. Some employees had been laid off for two months before the shutdown.

The Pillowtex closings register the biggest layoff in North Carolina's history and, according to the American Textile Manufacturers Institute, the largest ever in the U.S. textile industry. The company's main production facilities were in the Kannapolis area. The mills in Rowan and Cabarrus Counties alone employed more than 4,300. Many of these workers are looking toward

their union, UNITE, for information and guidance.

These workers scored a victory for all labor four years ago when they won representation by the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (now UNITE). After waging a 25-year fight to get the union in, workers won their first contract in 2000.

After months of sporadic employment the workers now have no jobs to return to. The UNITE hall in Kannapolis has been flooded with workers calling and stopping in, first to receive information on whether the company had been sold and then questioning what steps they could take next.

Talking to the *Salisbury Post*, a local newspaper, 58-year-old Leonard Chapman, president of UNITE Local 1501, asked, "Should I go to school? Or should I file for unemployment or re-train? Re-train for what?"

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Textile workers who lost jobs because of Pillowtex shutdown line up outside Kimball Lutheran Church in Kannapolis, North Carolina, August 4. Many are trying to find answers about their future from their union, UNITE.

Nicaraguan peasants march for land, credit

BY SETH GALINSKY

MIAMI—Several thousand peasants and farm workers began a 75-mile-long march on July 29 from Matagalpa, the coffee-growing center of Nicaragua, to Managua, the country's capital. They demanded land, cheap credit, and government aid for rural toilers hard hit by the world-wide drop in coffee prices and a drought. At the same time, some 6,000 peasants occupied farms and waged sit-down strikes and other pro-

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Union wins vote deadline at New York packing plant

BY DEAN HAZLEWOOD

BRONX, New York—Workers at the Garden Manor Farms meatpacking plant at the Hunts Point Market here scored a victory in their fight for union recognition. The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) ruled in early August that an election must be held by the end of the month on whether employees will be represented by United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW)

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Moscow, Beijing press north Korea to accept six-party talks with Washington

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

U.S. deputy secretary of state Richard Armitage told a news conference in Australia August 12 that talks between the governments of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and the United States are likely to start August 27 in Beijing, centering on Washington's demand that north Korea abandon its nuclear weapons program. At the U.S. government's insistence the negotiations will also include representatives of Beijing, Moscow, Seoul, and Tokyo.

Under pressure from these governments, particularly Beijing and Moscow—which have historically been close diplomatic and trade partners of the DPRK—north Korea dropped its previous insistence that such negotiations be preceded by face-to-face bilateral talks with Washington.

At the same time the DPRK restated its demand that the U.S. government withdraw its 37,000 troops from south Korea, and protested the latest round of military exercises involving U.S. and south Korean forces. Military drills between the two armies have sparked a number of student-led protests in the south, including in early August.

Following a meeting with Chinese vice foreign minister Wang Yi, Russia's deputy foreign minister Alexander Losyukov said August 11 that Pyongyang is "currently showing pleasing flexibility. Our Chinese colleagues also see positive dynamics in the position of the North Korean leadership."

Losyukov also warned Washington that "the situation when only one side imposes conditions is counter-productive and leads to deadlock."

"There are a number of issues that have

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South Korean police charge students demanding withdrawal of U.S. troops from Korea during August 4 protest at Yonchen military facility, 37 miles north of Seoul.

Concerted effort is needed in drive to up 'Militant' long-term readership

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Socialist workers, Young Socialists, and other *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* supporters upped the pace of the effort to increase the long-term readership of the socialist periodicals. During the second week of the three-week campaign, they sent in 75 subscription renewals to both periodicals, compared to 21 the first week of the drive (see chart on page 5).

A substantial challenge remains, however. With one week to go, 140 *Militant* and 69 *Perspectiva Mundial* subscription renewals—a total of 209—are needed to meet

the overall goals. Accomplishing this would mean that one in five of those who subscribed for the first time last spring re-upped.

Supporters of the drive in Cleveland, Omaha, and San Francisco are the first to make their goal for *Militant* subscription renewals. Their task now is to substantially surpass their local quota.

Those in Detroit are not too far behind. "One meat packer agreed to help talk to several subscribers he works with about renewing," wrote Ilona Gersh from Detroit. "They were among those who immediately

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U.S.-backed intervention force in Liberia to expand to 15,000

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON, D.C.—As U.S.-backed troops extended their deployment in Liberia's capital, Monrovia, the chief United Nations envoy to the West African nation, Jacques Klein, described plans to create an armed force of about 15,000 UN troops, drawn from a range of UN member countries, that will be deployed by November 1. The UN troops will replace a Nigerian-led force of some 3,200 troops that includes units from countries that are members of the Economic Community of West African States. They are backed up by as many as

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Brussels bows to U.S. on war-crimes law

BY SAM MANUEL

The Belgian Senate approved a revised war crimes bill August 1 to replace previous legislation under which war crimes charges have been brought against former U.S. president George H. Bush, current president George W. Bush, Vice President Richard Cheney, Secretary of State Colin Powell, Gen. Thomas Franks, and British prime minister Anthony Blair.

The new law passed by a vote of 39 to 4 with 20 abstentions. It had cleared the lower house of parliament July 29, and will take effect after it is signed by King Albert II, which is expected to be a formality. Brussels proposed the change after coming under heavy pressure from Washington and London to repeal the previous legislation.

As they expand use of their military might around the world, the U.S. rulers, in particu-

lar, have been pressing for immunity from prosecution for members of their military and government officials by other countries or institutions like the International Criminal Court (ICC).

The charges against former U.S. president Bush were brought on behalf of Iraqis who lost family members after U.S. pilots bombed a shelter killing 403 people, including 52 children and 261 women, in the 1991 war against Iraq. Charges against the current U.S. president and British prime minister stem from this year's imperialist assault on Iraq.

Brussels received sharp warnings from Washington, Paris, and Berlin demanding repeal of the law. U.S. secretary of defense Donald Rumsfeld threatened to block further funding for a new NATO headquarters in Belgium.

This is the second time the law has been altered. Earlier this year Brussels rushed through changes that permitted it to refer charges to the government of the country of origin of the accused, providing it had a "fair and democratic legal system," according to a report by the BBC. Using that provision, the cases against U.S. and British officials have essentially been dropped, along with that against Israeli prime minister Ariel Sha-

ron, charged with organizing massacres at the Sabra and Shatila Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon in 1982.

The attorney who brought the charges against Franks has appealed the decision. The new bill empowers a senior justice to decide which cases to prosecute with the decision not subject to appeal. Some 29 cases against former and present heads of states—among them Cuban president Fidel Castro and Palestinian Authority president Yasir Arafat—remain in effect.

The new legislation grants immunity to all foreign heads of state, requires a direct link of the offenses to Belgium, and stipulates that the accusers be Belgian citizens or residents of the country for at least three years prior to the commission of the crime.

In response to Washington's demands, members of parliament stumbled over each other to show proper contriteness. "We are a small country, we cannot act as an international judge," said Liberal Democrat Stef Goris. "We have made our country a joke," added Christian Democrat Pieter De Crem. "Problematic," said Socialist Party member and deputy head of parliament's foreign affairs committee, Dirk Van der Maelen, referring to the law.

The previous law allowed for war crimes

accusations to be filed in Belgian courts against anyone regardless of where the alleged offenses took place or the nationality of those involved in committing them. It has only been used successfully against four Rwandans living in Belgium who were convicted in 2001 of "genocide," according to the *International Herald Tribune*. They were given sentences of 12 to 20 years for alleged crimes committed during the Rwandan civil war in the mid-1990s.

The United Nations Security Council has also approved a resolution submitted by Washington that extends for another year an exemption from prosecution to citizens of countries that have not ratified the founding statutes of the International Criminal Court. Disapproving of the extension, three of the 15 Council members—France, Germany and Syria—abstained. Britain's representative to the Council, Jeremy Greenstock, supported the extension but added, "Whilst we understand the U.S. concerns...we do not share them."

Washington is also "negotiating" bilateral agreements prohibiting other countries from handing over U.S. citizens for prosecution by the ICC. The White House has suspended military aid to the governments that have turned down the arrangement.

Corrections

U.S. president George Bush wound up a five-day visit to five African nations on July 12, not July 19, as was stated in the front-page article "Bush tour in Africa aimed at continent's oil resources" in the August 4 issue.

In the same issue, the article "International socialist conference celebrates increasing trade union-building opportunities" incorrectly equated bride-price with dowry in reporting a delegate's remarks. In fact, they are opposites. The dowry is the property that a husband receives from his wife or her family upon their marriage. Bride-price is the payment rendered by the prospective husband to the family of the bride.

Both members and staffers of the Service Employees International Union Local 32BJ took part in the July 19 protest in Farmingville, New York, against an anti-immigrant fire-bombing. The article in the August 11 issue, "N.Y. protest blasts anti-immigrant arson," only reported the participation of staffers.

Nine miners were trapped underground for 78 hours at the Quecreek mine in Somerset, Pennsylvania, before their rescue on July 28, 2002. The name of the mine was misspelled in the August 18 issue.

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Local 342. "This is really good news," said John Jiménez, who has worked as a butcher at the company for three and a half years. "The company was told to give the labor board a list of the workers who can vote in the election by today," he stated in an August 8 interview. "We are almost done."

The workers have been fighting since November 2002 to bring in the union. Jiménez explained that a union veteran who got hired into the plant initiated the organizing effort last year. "He told us if we got everyone to sign union recognition cards he would call the union," Jiménez said. "So that's what we did." The company succeeded repeatedly in stalling the vote by trying to tie the workers up in NLRB hearings and appeals.

By the end of June, the workers had had enough—they went on strike to protest the company's stalling tactics.



Hunts Point market seen from air

The walkout took place over the busy July 4 holiday weekend, beginning July 3 and ending July 11, putting real pressure on management.

During the strike, delegations and individual workers from a number of plants in the market made visits to the picketline during their lunch and other breaks to express support for the organizing drive.

"It made everybody stronger," said Robert Roman, also a butcher at Garden Manor Farms, referring to the strike. "Everybody is together now. Nobody is backing down." Roman said the company has continued to try various ways to forestall the election, including filing charges with the NLRB that workers were intimidated into signing union cards. "But it doesn't matter. We are going to get there sooner or later. They are down to their last bullets," Roman added, referring to the company.

"If we keep together they can't do anything against us," said Jiménez. "We are the people who make the money for the company. Without us they can't do anything. So in the end we are going to win."

As part of the effort to unionize the more than 20 workers at the plant, and possibly other shops, organizers are maintaining a regular presence at the Hunts Point Coop-

erative Market—a 60-acre complex in the Bronx with 47 meat companies. Only about half a dozen of these shops are unionized at this point.

After the recent ruling by the labor board, organizers handed out flyers in English and Spanish announcing: "Garden Manor Farms Bosses Lose Another One." They also distributed a flyer outlining various methods bosses often use to divide the workforce and disrupt organizing efforts.

Workers at Garden Manor say the main issues fueling the organizing drive are low wages, lack of benefits, and abusive treatment by the bosses.

Dean Hazlewood is a member of UFCW Local 342 and works at Hunts Point.

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Mushroom cloud from U.S. nuclear bombing of Hiroshima, August 6, 1945.

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The Militant

Vol. 67/No. 29

Closing news date: August 12, 2003

Editor: ARGIRIS MALAPANIS
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Published weekly except for one week in January, July, September and December.
The *Militant* (ISSN 0026-3885), 152 West 36th St., #401, New York, NY 10018. Telephone: (212) 594-1014 or 594-8832; Fax (212) 594-1018.
E-mail: TheMilitant@verizon.net
The *Militant* **website** is: www.themilitant.com

Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to The Militant Business Office, 152 West 36th St., #401, New York, NY 10018.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY.
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the *Militant*, 152 West 36th St., #401, New York, NY 10018.

Subscriptions: **United States:** for one-year subscription send \$45 to above address.

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Why Washington bombed Hiroshima

On August 6, 1945, and again on August 9, the U.S. government dropped atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, becoming the only government in the world that has ever used nuclear weapons in warfare. Tens of thousands of people died instantly, with thousands more dying later. This year is the 58th anniversary of that atrocity. To mark the occasion the *Militant* is printing excerpts from an article by Fred Halstead, a longtime leader of the Socialist Workers Party, that appeared in the Jan. 25, 1965, issue of the paper under the headline, “What the Record Shows: U.S. Guilt at Hiroshima.”

BY FRED HALSTEAD

The general impression still exists in this country (but not abroad) that somehow the dropping of the A-bombs on Japan caused the end of the war and eliminated a bloody invasion of the Japanese home islands, thus saving more lives than the A-bombs themselves snuffed out. This is a lie manufactured and spread in the first place by President Truman and British prime ministers Churchill and Attlee, who took responsibility for the decision to drop the bombs....

What are the facts? This is what the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (1959 edition) has to say: “After the fall of Okinawa [on June 21, 1945], [Japanese Prime Minister] Suzuki’s main objective was to get Japan out of the war on the best possible terms, though that could not be announced to the general public... Unofficial peace feelers were transmitted through Switzerland and Sweden... Later the Japanese made a formal request to Russia to aid in bringing hostilities to an end....”

These Japanese overtures were known to Washington because the dispatches between Foreign Minister Togo in Tokyo and Japanese Ambassador Sato in Moscow were intercepted by the United States.

The entire affair is documented in the Hoover Library volume *Japan’s Decision to Surrender*, by Robert J.C. Butlow (Stanford University, 1954). Butlow quotes the dispatch that was received and decoded in Washington July 13, 1945: “Togo to Sato... Convey His Majesty’s strong desire to secure a termination of the war... Unconditional surrender is the only obstacle to peace.” These requests continued through July.

Butlow documents that Washington knew the one “condition” insisted upon by the Japanese government was the continuation of the emperor on his throne and the symbolic recognition this implied of the Japanese home islands as a political entity. As it turned out this was exactly the “condition” that was granted when the peace was

finally signed after the A-bombings August 6 and 9....

Why, then, did the United States drop the bombs? One of the few writers who claims to believe the official alibi is Robert C. Batchelder, author of the well-documented *The Irreversible Decision* (1962). Even Batchelder admits: “It seems clear that had the [U.S.] attempt to end the war by political and diplomatic means been undertaken sooner, more seriously, and with more skill, the decision to use the atomic bomb might well have been rendered unnecessary.”

Batchelder explains the affair away by attributing it to U.S. diplomatic inefficiency and a tendency in U.S. leaders to deal with the war in purely military terms and neglect political aspects. But the evidence indicates the final A-bomb decision was made precisely for political reasons.

Indeed, some top U.S. military men—including Eisenhower and the chief of staff of the U.S. armed forces at the time, Adm. William D. Leahy—declined to support use of the bomb. In his book, *I Was There* (1950), Leahy says: “It is my opinion that the use of this barbarous weapon at Hiroshima and Nagasaki was of no material assistance in our war against Japan. The Japanese were already defeated and ready to surrender because of the effective sea blockade and the successful bombing with conventional weapons....”

[The atomic bombing of] Hiroshima and Nagasaki cost, by the conservative American estimates, 110,000 dead and as many injured; and, by Japanese estimates, twice that many. The evidence strongly indicates that one major motivation of the A-bomb decision was precisely to test the bomb on live targets, so as to confront the postwar world with the proven fact of overwhelming U.S. military superiority. It also established the fact that U.S. imperialism not only had the

Brazil protests condemn attack on pensions



Some 20,000 public workers march August 6 in Brasilia, Brazil’s capital, to condemn Congress vote in favor of proposals by government of Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva to undercut state pensions. The proposals would raise retirement age, cap pensions for future retirees, and tax pensions of retired public workers.

bomb but had the ruthlessness to use it.

The haste with which the bomb was used indicates that the U.S. purposely ignored the Japanese peace requests (which were known in Washington on July 13) in order to drop the bomb before the war ended. No one was sure the bomb would work until July 18 when it was tested in New Mexico. The only other two bombs in existence were quickly dispatched to the Pacific base and were dropped on August 6 and 9. This haste is unexplained by combat problems. By that stage of the war U.S. bombers and ships encountered no serious resistance and no U.S. troop attacks were scheduled until November 1, so the haste was not necessary to “save American lives.”

One of the most thoughtful works on the subject is that by the British nuclear scientist, P.M.S. Blackett, entitled *Fear, War and the Bomb* (London, 1949).... It is Blackett’s well-founded thesis that one reason for the

haste was to drop the bomb before the Russians entered the war against Japan. The allies had already agreed at Yalta that the USSR would attack Japan three months after Germany surrendered. Stalin had notified the United States that the Russian armies would be ready for that attack on schedule, that is, August 8. The bomb was dropped on Hiroshima August 6....

To sum up: That Japan was defeated and suing for peace before the bombs were dropped is a fact established beyond doubt. The motivations of U.S. rulers in dropping the bombs anyway is, of course, a disputed question. But the evidence utterly fails to support the official alibi that it was done to avoid costly battles. On the contrary, the evidence overwhelmingly indicates that the civilian populations of Hiroshima and Nagasaki were murdered, not to end World War II, but to launch what later came to be known as the cold war.

Lieberman assails fellow Democrats for their attacks on Bush over Iraq war

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

Senator Joseph Lieberman, one of nine Democratic politicians running for their party’s presidential nomination in the 2004 race, has assailed fellow Democrats for their attacks on U.S. president George Bush around tactics on Iraq.

“By its actions, the Bush administration threatens to give a bad name to a just war,” Lieberman said, at a July 28 press conference at the Capitol building in Washington, D.C. “But by their words, some in my party are sending out a message that they don’t know a just war when they see it, and, more

broadly, they’re not prepared to use our military strength to protect our security and the cause of freedom.

“We’ve watched some opponents of the war seize upon this emerging scandal with disquieting zeal, as though it offers proof that they were right all along,” Lieberman continued. “The same is true of some of those who supported the war but now seem to have forgotten why. What made this war just was the clear evidence of 12 years of Saddam Hussein’s brutality and evasion of responsibility. And that is not diminished by those 16 misleading words in George W.

Bush’s speech.”

Lieberman was referring to the much-publicized statement by Bush in his 2003 State of the Union address that the Iraqi regime was trying to get uranium from Africa for its alleged nuclear weapons program.

When pressed by reporters on who he was referring to among Democrats, Lieberman pointed to former Vermont governor Howard Dean, Senator John Kerry, and House minority leader Richard Gephardt.

“Look, Governor Dean has had a principled objection to the war,” Lieberman said, according to a transcript of the press conference. “He said the other day after the death, or the killing, of Saddam’s two sons that the ends don’t justify the means. I don’t agree with that.”

When he was asked about specifying who were the Democratic Party leaders who supported the war but now seem to have forgotten why, Lieberman stated, “I’ve been reading statements made by Senator Kerry and Congressman Gephardt—there’s a danger that in expressing the justified questions about the 16 words in the State of the Union, about the stunning lack of preparedness of the Bush administration in post-Saddam Iraq, that we obscure the fact that this was a just war.”

As Lieberman pointed out, the large majority of Democrats in Congress voted for a resolution supporting the U.S.-led assault on Iraq and have backed the occupation of the country, including the actions of the U.S. military there such as the recent killing of two of Saddam Hussein’s sons.

Dean is among the most liberal of the nine Democratic presidential aspirants, and one of the leading contenders for his party’s nomination so far. In the speech launching his presidential campaign June 23, he criticized “the doctrine of preemptive war espoused by this administration” and its “disdain for allies, treaties, and international organizations.” He also vowed to “defend America against terrorism,” and chastised the Bush administration for failing to find “weapons of mass destruction” in Iraq.

North Carolina textile giant closes down

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I don’t know.” Another worker told the *Post*, “I hope that I can find a job and hope that I don’t lose my house.”

Cynthia Haynes, president of UNITE Local 1506, stated that the after the 25-year fight to bring in UNITE, “The union is still all that workers have.” She worked at Plant 6 for more than 20 years. A big problem workers face today is lack of health-care coverage, Haynes said. “Workers can’t get the medicine they need to live.” People are volunteering to buy necessary drugs for displaced workers, she said.

When Pillowtex announced the closing it immediately terminated the medical insurance of all laid-off workers.

A number of bourgeois politicians have used demagoguery, taking advantage of the plight of these workers to bolster their electoral chances in 2004.

Democratic Party politician Jesse Jackson, for example, spoke to a crowd of about 100 workers in downtown Kannapolis August 6, at an event widely covered by the press. “Bush gives the top 1 percent a tax cut, and working people get a job cut,” he said. Jackson told the crowd that he would organize a march and rally to protest the plant shutdowns.

Other capitalist politicians have joined

the fray, most blaming foreign competition, imports, and U.S. government trade policies, like the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), for the Pillowtex downfall.

North Carolina state governor Michael Easley, for example, sent a representative to the UNITE office in Kannapolis to make a videotape to send to U.S. president George Bush to show how these trade policies have hurt the workers, he said. The governor’s emissary interviewed a dozen workers. “While he’s over there fighting to save other

Nicaraguan peasants march

Continued from front page

tests in northern Nicaragua to press the same demands.

Peasant leader Pascual Hernández Morán told the Managua-based *El Nuevo Diario* that the government has not implemented the Sept. 13, 2002, Las Tunas accords, in which it promised to carry out measures to alleviate the crisis in the countryside.

Some health-care centers were set up, Hernández Morán said, “but on the question of property, the lack of action is blinding.”

“We’re in the same place we were when

people, people in America are suffering and losing jobs because of unfair trade deals,” said Delores Gambrell, a longtime union activist who worked at Plant 16 in China Grove for over 30 years, referring to Bush and the U.S. occupation of Iraq. “I’m ashamed that I’m a Republican, and my party’s not helping. I think it’s time for him to bring his tail back over here and do his job, be a president in the U.S. and not overseas. And if he’s not he can take his butt back to Texas and keep it there.” Her remarks were typical of many whom the governor’s envoy interviewed.

we signed the accord,” Carlos José Blandón, a leader of the Association of Rural Workers (ATC), told *La Prensa*. “No land has been turned over from the land banks or has been given to the cooperatives,” continued Blandón, who is also a leader of the march.

In some cases, peasants and farm cooperatives have been unable to obtain credit because they never received official title to the land they work.

In July 1979 workers and peasants in

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Palestinian in U.S. jail speaks from behind bars

BY RÓGER CALERO

YORK, Pennsylvania—"I want to congratulate you and supporters of your fight for the victory in your case against your deportation," said Farouk Abdel-Muhti during my visit to the York County prison. The interview came during my speaking tour, through which the Róger Calero Defense Committee aims to share the lessons of this successful defense campaign, and to link up with fights against deportation and other boss and government attacks.

John Studer, who coordinates the defense committee and is the director of the Political Rights Defense Fund, joined me in the July 28 visit.

The victory, said Abdel-Muhti—who has spoken out in my defense from the time I was seized by immigration cops last December—"was possible thanks to the support of working people and those who feel and participate in our struggles."

Abdel-Muhti has been jailed for more than a year, but he faces no criminal charges. The immigration cops say they are holding him on the basis of immigration law violations and a 1995 deportation order.

In February Abdel-Muhti, who was born in Palestine before the formation of the Israeli state and has lived in the U.S. since the 1970s, was transferred from the Passaic County jail in Paterson, New Jersey—one of the prisons used by the immigration police to jail immigrant workers facing deportation—to the York County jail here. That prison topped the list of the largest immigration jails in the country in 1999. Immigrants facing deportation proceedings comprised 44 percent of its population in 2000. Abdel-Muhti has been locked up in solitary since February 26, and can leave his cell for only 45 minutes a day.

Abdel-Muhti was brought out dressed in an orange prison uniform, and remained handcuffed and shackled throughout our meeting. We were separated by a glass partition and conducted our discussion by phone. "The government is stepping on

our constitutional rights and violating our human rights," he said. He said his transfer away from family and supporters in New York and New Jersey to this Pennsylvania prison, which has been cited for its abusive practices by Amnesty International, was punishment for his continued political activities inside prison. Abdel-Muhti was involved along with other inmates in a hunger strike while being held at the Passaic County jail last January to protest the prisoners' indefinite imprisonment.

The Palestinian activist said he was being punished for being critical not only of the brutal dispossession of the Palestinians, but also of all the crimes committed by the U.S. immigration police. "In this jail, even the doctor told me that I have no right to speak because I am an immigrant and a 'terrorist,'" he said. Members of the Committee for the Release of Farouk Abdel-Muhti are pressing the government for his release and for an end to deportation proceedings. His fight

has become intertwined with that of others facing similar threats.

"The fight for my release and against my deportation is for all those that have been victimized after September 11, and that strengthens my commitment," he said. Hearing a brief account of the most important lessons drawn from the Calero defense campaign's victory, Abdel-Muhti was particularly interested in the response found in the labor movement. "The support you received shows how the unions can fight for our interests," he said.

The Committee for the Release of Farouk Abdel-Muhti has urged supporters of democratic rights to send letters of protest demanding his release and an end to all deportation proceedings to David J. Venturella, Assistant Deputy Executive Associate Commissioner, office of Detention and Removal, 425 I St, NW, Washington,



El Diario La Prensa/Osvaldo Pérez
Palestinian activist Farouk Abdel-Muhti

DC 20536; , tel. (212) 305-2734, fax (202) 353-9435; David.j.venturella@usdoj.gov.

To write to Abdel-Muhti, address correspondence as follows: Farouk Abdel-Muhti #75122, York County Jail, 3400 Concord Road, York, PA 17402-9580.

‘Journalist wins anti-deportation fight’

The following article was published in the July 25 *Washington Hispanic*, a Spanish-language weekly newspaper in Washington, D.C., under the above headline. Translation and subheading are by the *Militant*.

BY ALEX ORMAZA

For Nicaraguan journalist Róger Calero, what should have been a happy return home and the start of editing work on topics he was covering in Cuba and Mexico ended up as a nightmare with the Department of Immigration. The Department kept him in jail 12 days on the verge of deportation, all because of a minor infraction with the police that the new immigration laws placed outside the law.

"They detained me at the Houston, Texas, airport on December 3, 2002. They

said that because I had told the Department of Immigration when I requested permanent residency in 1989 about my 1988 arrest for selling marijuana to an undercover cop, with the changes in the law I was now deportable," Calero said. He had traveled to Havana and Guadalajara to report on a meeting to discuss the Free Trade Agreement of the Americas for the magazine *Perspectiva Mundial*. He is its associate editor. From prison, Calero contacted the editor of his magazine, who in turn mobilized the Political Rights Defense Fund to form the Róger Calero Defense Committee.

One of hundreds of thousands

Since then seven months have gone by "and after massive support from trade unions and other organizations," according to Calero, a judge declared him not deport-

able and he was given back his residency card. According to Lea Sherman, from the Textile Workers Union (UNITE), who supported Calero in his fight against deportation, "the case of this journalist is one of hundreds of thousands that are occurring in the United States but are not made public." Sherman pointed out that many organizations in the United States and other countries have joined the campaign.

The Nicaraguan journalist told *Washington Hispanic* that "in a few weeks we will be taking this story to Canada, where there is a fight against deportation of Algerian refugees going on today. We want to take our message that it is possible to reverse unjust laws and have people's civil rights respected, especially if pressure is applied with citizen solidarity."

Before he took up journalism, Calero, who is married to a U.S. citizen, worked at meatpacking plants in Des Moines, Iowa, and St. Paul, Minnesota, where he participated in a decisive union drive at Dakota Premium Food, in South St. Paul. In the meantime, once his tour through various states of the nation is completed, Calero will visit various countries where invitations have been made to him to expose what he calls "the silent persecutions by the authorities of hundreds of thousands of immigrants in this country."

Calero joins Atlanta driver's license protest

BY ELLIE GARCÍA

ATLANTA—"From the point of view of someone fighting against deportations, in my own case and those of many others, it's important to see the fight for the right of immigrants to have a driver's license as one of many struggles working people in the United States are participating in," said Róger Calero at a meeting of over 100 people here July 22. The gathering had been called by Georgians for Safer Roads, an organization that campaigns for driver's licenses for undocumented workers. It was held at the offices of the Latin American Association in Atlanta.

The meeting was called to protest a bill Georgia's governor Sonny Perdue signed into law May 31. The legislation prohibits immigrants in the state from buying a vehicle, or renewing license plates for one they already own, without having a valid Georgia driver's license.

"I have lived in Georgia for seven years. I own a small construction business and I'm very interested in how this law is going to affect me," Arturo Castejón, a Mexican immigrant, told the gathering. "I own three pick-up trucks and I won't be able to keep using them for my job."

Thousands of people have been affected in a similar fashion since the law went into effect, with many opting to move to other states as a result.

Crews of construction workers, electricians, concrete workers, contractors, and others came from work to the 11:00 a.m. meeting to discuss the problem, after an announcement that the gathering was taking place was broadcast on Spanish-language radio.

Most people there called for actions to demand that the law be repealed, including a work stoppage and a march. A Direct Action committee was formed to organize such mobilizations. Calero joined the discussion with workers on the importance of fighting to win and supporting other struggles. He pointed to a UNITE organizer present and

encouraged everyone there to back the efforts of workers to organize unions.

Three people who took part in the driver's license meeting came to a public event next evening featuring Calero. The panel of speakers included James Harris of the Socialist Workers Party and Adelina Nicholls, vice president of the Coordinating Council of Latino Community Leaders of Atlanta (Coordinadora). Nicholls is a local leader of the driver's license struggle.

"Coordinadora is organizing the first Latino Rights Forum for September 28," Nicholls announced. Among the workshops is one on driver's licenses. The conference will be on the same weekend that the buses for the Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride will set off from Atlanta and join with riders from nine other U.S. cities headed toward Washington to focus attention on struggles of immigrant workers against discrimination on the job and their right to live in the United States.

Calero pointed out that because attacks on immigrants are at the spear point of the ruling class offensive, "defense of the rights of immigrant workers—opposition to 'no match' Social Security letters, repealing of laws such as those restricting immigrants from obtaining driver's licenses or renewing car registration, ending factory raids and deportations—is a question for the entire labor movement." Organizing to press for these demands, as the protest meeting the day before set out to do, can increase the self-confidence and unity of working people. "It makes us stronger," Calero said.

Harris thanked everyone for coming to the meeting, on behalf of Calero's party, the SWP, and for joining the struggle that pushed back the government in its attempt to deport Calero.

The 29 people in attendance at the July 23 event contributed \$559 towards the expenses of Calero's tour and to help the Political Rights Defense Fund, which helped initiate the Róger Calero Defense Committee, replenish its war chest for similar fights

in the future.

Calero was interviewed by WCCD, a Spanish radio news program, and the Spanish-language newspapers *Nuestro Semanario* and *Mundo Hispánico*. The latter is the most widely distributed Latino newspaper in Georgia. He was also interviewed on the English-language radio station WRFG.

Cross burning at Maryland mosque is condemned at press conference

BY GLOVA SCOTT

WASHINGTON, D.C.—A three-foot-high wooden cross was set afire outside the Dar-us-Salaam mosque and adjoining Muslim Al-Huda school in College Park, Maryland, at 2 a.m. July 24. A surveillance camera videotape showed at least two people carrying out the cross burning. A man, sitting in a car while waiting for a friend working on the floors inside the mosque, also witnessed two or three young white men on the lawn who then sped away in a van after the cross was set ablaze. Local firefighters extinguished the fire in minutes.

Rizwan Mowlana, executive director of the Council on American-Islamic

Relations, said in a phone interview that he had gotten a call about the incident at 5 a.m. and organized a 12:30 p.m. press conference that day. About 25 people came representing the NAACP, the American Civil Liberties Union, local politicians, human rights groups, and area churches. Individuals from the mosque and school also attended.

"This is obviously a hate crime and is very disturbing," said Mowlana, noting that he had called the FBI to investigate. "We have a common enemy," he stated, announcing his plans to pull together a coalition to fight to bring those responsible for the cross burning to justice. For more information, contact www.cairmd.org.

Róger Calero Fight to Win/‘Sí se puede’ Tour

The Róger Calero Defense Committee is organizing a speaking tour for Calero in cities across the United States and around the world to build on his successful antideportation fight. Below is the schedule for the tour. Requests for additional tour dates can be made to: Róger Calero Defense Committee, c/o PRDF, Box 761, Church St. Station, New York, NY 10007; phone/fax 212-563-0585; calerodefense@yahoo.com

Philadelphia	August 16
Utah/Colorado	August 18–19
Montreal	August 20–21
Toronto	August 22–23
Vancouver	August 24–25

New Zealand	August 28–30
Australia	Aug. 31–Sept. 1
Britain	Sept. 4–7
Sweden	Sept. 8–10
Iceland	Sept. 11–13

Liberia intervention

Continued from front page
2,300 U.S. Marines stationed on three warships off Liberia’s coast.

Meanwhile, Liberia’s president Charles Taylor resigned August 11—a central demand of Washington before deploying substantial forces on the ground—and flew to neighboring Nigeria, which had offered him asylum. About 100 South African troops, along with forces from Nigeria, guarded the Executive Mansion in Monrovia that day. Several African heads of state were present in the ceremony where Taylor handed over power to his vice president.

Klein said the goal of the UN-sanctioned intervention is to establish a “government of technocrats” with a “sprinkling of international civil servants” to run the country for as long as two years before “free and fair elections” could be held. This government, he added, would restructure the banking system and foreign ministry and other governing institutions, and rebuild the infrastructure, including Liberia’s railroad from Monrovia to neighboring Guinea.

According to an Associated Press dispatch, the UN envoy appealed to about a dozen countries to provide troops and other resources. The governments of Bangladesh and Namibia have agreed to provide as many as 5,000 soldiers. Those of India, Pakistan, Ireland, and South Africa may also provide troops. So far the Pentagon has authorized only 20 U.S. Marines to go ashore.

Despite Washington’s posture of re-

straint, the U.S. ambassador to Liberia, John Blaney, has been centrally involved in the deployment of the West African troops and negotiations with the armed opposition groups. With Taylor still officially the head of state, Blaney escorted the commander of the Nigerian troops to a meeting to negotiate with LURD. “The meeting went well. We are on track,” reported U.S. military attaché Colonel Sue Ann Sandusky following the meeting.

Washington seeks a broader foothold against its imperialist rivals in Africa, especially in the oil-rich region of West Africa. A joint effort by Washington and London to impose international sanctions on the Liberian diamond trade in January 2001 was stymied by the former French colonies of Burkina Faso and Mali with backing from Paris. The French government also blocked imposition of sanctions on its interests in timber and maritime registry.

On August 11 Taylor handed over power to Liberia’s vice president, Moses Blah. In a televised speech the previous day Taylor blamed Washington for the country’s civil strife, calling it an “American war” motivated by Washington’s eagerness to get further access to the country’s natural resources. He said the U.S. government was backing the main opposition group, Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy (LURD). “They can call off their dogs now,” he said, referring to the LURD.

The next day U.S. ambassador Blaney

SWP party-building fund under way

BY ANGEL LARISCY

NEWARK, New Jersey—This week the *Militant* carries the first of a weekly chart showing the goals Socialist Workers Party supporters in local areas have adopted towards the \$80,000 SWP Party-Building Fund, which runs until October 15. As the chart shows, the pledges received so far fall short of the goal.

Socialist workers in three cities have yet to adopt targets. Elsewhere fund organizers are reviewing their goals with an eye to raising them, bearing in mind the political opportunities before the party today and in the months ahead. These include: advancing work in defense of the Cuban Revolution; building support in the labor movement for packinghouse workers on strike against Tyson Foods in Jefferson, Wisconsin, as well as other union struggles; getting the word out on the job and elsewhere for the Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride, and increasing the long-term readership of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*.

\$80,000 Party-Building Fund July 12–October 15: Week 5 of 13

	Goal	Paid	%
Tampa	1,400	550	39%
Boston	2,700	575	21%
Utah	1,000	150	15%
San Francisco	7,100	1,000	14%
Chicago	3,800	300	8%
Houston	3,000	250	8%
Birmingham	1,400	100	7%
Cleveland	1,000	55	6%
Newark	3,500	200	6%
New York	10,000	600	6%
Detroit	2,200	50	2%
Twin Cities	4,000	25	1%
Washington, DC	2,700	30	1%
Atlanta	4,300	0	0%
Des Moines	1,200	0	0%
Los Angeles	7,500	0	0%
NE Pennsylvania	2,000	0	0%
Omaha	1,100	0	0%
Pittsburgh	3,300	0	0%
Western Colorado	2,700	0	0%
Miami	0	350	0%
Philadelphia	0	0	0%
Seattle	0	0	0%
Other		1,111	
Total	65,900	5,871	9%
Goal/Should be	80,000	18,400	23%

Socialist Workers contest Houston mayoralty



Tony Dutrow, Socialist Workers candidate for Houston mayor, in local Pathfinder bookstore. August 9 *Houston Chronicle* carried this photo along with article on campaign launching. A barbecue and forum that day kicked off drive to collect 4,000 signatures to put Dutrow on ballot. Petitioning lasts from August 15 to September 14. To help please call Dutrow’s campaign at (713) 869-6550.

dismissed the charge. “We haven’t supported LURD,” he said.

“For us in LURD the war is over,” Sekou Fofana, a leader of the group, told Reuters August 11. “Once [Taylor] leaves Liberia today, we are not going to fight.”

Washington had pressed hard for Taylor’s departure. U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell also made it clear that Washington backs “war-crime charges” against Taylor handed down by a UN court in the former British colony Sierra Leone because of his support for rebels in that country. “If Mr. Taylor leaves Liberia and is given asylum in Nigeria, this does not remove the indictment in any way,” Powell said.

Both opposition groups, LURD and MODEL, the Movement for Democracy in Liberia, are made up of former government officials and military commanders in Taylor’s regime. “Old Foes Embrace New Liberian Truce” read the headline of a *Washington Post* article on the first meeting of commanders of government troops and the armed opposition. Liberian Col. Lewis Brah walked across a bridge leading into Monrovia that had been the scene of some of the heaviest fighting just days earlier to meet his old friend known to him only as Gen. Azim, the article reported. “We were hugging and shaking hands,” Brah said after the meeting. “We drink. We smoke. We talk about the past.”

LURD forces are armed and trained

CALENDAR

Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride.

Immigrant workers and their allies will set out from nine major U.S. cities and cross the country in buses in late September 2003. They will converge on Washington, D.C. and then travel to Liberty State Park in New Jersey October 3, and then Flushing Meadows Park, Queens, New York for a mass rally on October 4, 2003. Sponsors include AFL-CIO, National Council of La Raza, UNITE, United Food and Commercial Workers Union. *For more information go to <http://www.iwfr.org>*

WASHINGTON, D.C.

National Civil Rights March: Defeat Ward Connerly, Defend Affirmative Action and Integration; Realize the Promise of Brown v. Board of Education. Sat., Aug. 23, 12 noon. *Assemble at Howard University, 2400 Georgia Ave., NW, march to Lincoln Memorial.*
Seventh National Conference of the New Civil Rights Movement. Sat.–Sun., Aug. 23–24, Howard University.

The march and conference will oppose campaign of anti-affirmative action ballot initiatives spearheaded by Ward Connerly.

NEW YORK

Manhattan

After the Vieques Victory: How does Puerto Rico fit into U.S. Strategies for Global Domination? Speakers: Jorge Farinacci, Socialist Front of Puerto Rico; Ismael Guadalupe, Committee for the Rescue & Development of Vieques. Sat., Sept. 20, 10:00 a.m. Donation: \$6/\$8/\$10. Auspices: Vieques Support Campaign. *Brecht Forum, 122 West 27th St., 10th floor.(718) 610-4751 or (212) 677-0619.*

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

NEW JERSEY

Newark

Origins of Women’s Oppression. Speaker: Laura Garza, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Aug. 23, 7:30 p.m. Dinner at 6:30 p.m. *Donation: \$5 dinner, \$5 program. 168 Bloomfield Ave., 2nd Floor, Newark. Tel. (973) 481-0077.*

by the government of Guinea. The group has its diplomatic headquarters in Conakry, Guinea’s capital. Its leaders say funding for the group comes from exiles living in the United States, where some of its central leaders live and the group functions freely. According to an exposé in the *Liberian Post* magazine, LURD also receives indirect aid from Washington and London. Washington has increased military aid to Guinea, which in turn has increased supplies to LURD.

U.S. corporations enjoy the lion’s share of foreign contracts and investments in Guinea, which has the world’s second-largest bauxite reserves and more diamonds than Sierra Leone and Liberia combined.

MODEL emerged this year from a factional split in LURD and has its headquarters in French-dominated Ivory Coast. Both groups are divided along ethnic lines—with Mandingos supporting LURD and MODEL based largely among Krahn.

Militant/Perspectiva Mundial Renewal Drive July26–August 17: Week 2

Country	Militant			PM	
	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold
NEW ZEALAND					
Auckland	4	2	50%		
Christchurch	4	2	50%		
N.Z. total	8	4	50%		
SWEDEN					
Stockholm	4	3	75%	1	0
Gothenburg	4	1	25%	0	0
SWEDEN total	8	4	50%	1	0
UNITED STATES					
Cleveland	3	4	133%	1	0
Omaha	3	3	100%	5	3
San Francisco	8	8	100%	4	0
Tampa	5	4	80%	1	0
Miami	7	5	71%	3	0
Houston	6	4	67%	1	0
New York	12	8	67%	6	3
Twin Cities	8	5	63%	6	1
Boston	4	2	50%	3	0
Newark	6	3	50%	2	0
Seattle	8	4	50%	1	0
Detroit	8	3	38%	2	1
Chicago	15	4	27%	8	0
Utah	4	1	25%	5	2
Western Colorado	8	2	25%	6	0
Birmingham	5	1	20%	2	0
Philadelphia	5	1	20%	2	1
Los Angeles	12	2	17%	5	0
Atlanta	8	1	13%	2	0
Washington, DC	8	1	13%	4	0
Des Moines	4	0	0%	2	0
NE Pennsylvania	7	0	0%	0	0
Pittsburgh	8	0	0%	0	0
U.S. total	162	66	39%	71	10
ICELAND	8	3	38%		
CANADA					
Vancouver	7	3	43%	1	0
Montreal	4	1	25%	3	0
Toronto	6	1	17%	1	0
CANADA total	17	5	29%	5	0
UNITED KINGDOM					
Scotland	3	1	33%		
London	10	2	20%	2	0
UK total	13	3	23%	2	0
AUSTRALIA	8	0	0%	1	0
International totals	224	85	38%	80	11
Goal/Should be	225	150	67%	80	54
IN THE UNIONS					
	Militant			PM	
	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold
UNITED STATES					
UFCW	13	4	31%	15	5
UMWA	9	2	22%	4	1
UNITE	13	2	15%	2	2
Total	35	8	23%	21	8

Socialist workers focus work on union building

BY FRANCISCO PICADO
AND WILLIAM WEST

SALK LAKE CITY—Socialist workers employed in coalfields across the United States met here August 2–3 to discuss how to carry through a major political reorientation of their work among miners. The meeting included socialist workers and Young Socialists working in mines organized by the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) and some working in nonunion mines.

“This meeting is to implement a radical change in the work of socialists in the UMWA,” explained Anna Guerrero in the opening report to the meeting. Guerrero is a coal miner in a nonunion mine in Arizona. “The work we do has to be centered on building the union and its transformation into a revolutionary instrument of the working class,” she said. “We have been focused on getting socialist newspapers and books into the hands of our co-workers and getting the necessary job skills, and we have retreated from our strategic trade-union orientation.”

“Work to transform the unions can be done today—strengthening the union where it exists and fighting to organize it where it does not,” Guerrero continued. “There are serious discussions about organizing the union at two of the mines where socialist miners are working today.”

“We must be known as trade unionists of word and deed who use the structures of our union to advance struggles alongside our co-workers and who bring to the union the social questions that the working class is facing today, like racism and sexism,” said Jason Alessio, a coal miner at the Deserado mine in Colorado. “To say that you are building a movement without this perspective is empty talk,” he continued. “When you live by this perspective, then it has real meaning to explain to your co-workers why you are a communist.”

“There are miners where I work, younger and older, who are collaborating on how to use the union to push the company back on questions like mandatory overtime,” said Alessio.

“A recent newspaper article brought home to me the importance of not missing our union’s activities,” said Francisco Picado, also a miner at Deserado. “This last commemoration of the 1914 massacre of miners in Ludlow, Colorado, included a march by Hispanic steelworkers from Denver, who joined in with miners in the restoration of the recently vandalized Ludlow monument. The article highlighted the participation of Mexicans in those early battles for our union. Most of the children who were murdered by the bosses that day were from Mexico,” he said.

“The coverage socialist miners did for the *Militant* newspaper of the flood that trapped miners at the Quecreek mine in Somerset, Pennsylvania, and the subsequent cover-up by the bosses and the government last year was useful,” said Tony Lane, a miner in Pennsylvania. “But we need to do such efforts starting with our union and how to advance it.”

“We have begun discussions with co-workers about organizing to bring in the union where we work,” said William West, a miner in Arizona. “The bosses take advantage of the fact that many of my co-workers have been forced to migrate here from other countries to find work,” he continued. “By bringing the union into the workplace we cut across all of that, because all workers, regardless of legal status, can fight for our union as equals. Many immigrants are joining unions in the U.S.”

“We want to take full part and responsibility in the organizing drive where I work,” said Joe Armstrong, a coal miner at a nonunion mine in Colorado, where supporters of the UMWA are trying to build support for the union. “This is not the first attempt to organize this mine and I’m looking forward to working with the veteran unionists who are leading this struggle.”

The socialist miners also decided to assign miners from the Pittsburgh area to discuss out how to strengthen communist trade-union work in West Virginia. “This area of Appalachia is where important battles around safety and black lung were fought in the late 1960s,” said Lane, referring to a deadly disease miners develop from breathing coal dust into their lungs. “Through these battles the ranks of miners wrested more power into their hands. It remains a strong area of the union as shown by the nearly 1,000-strong protest in May in Charleston, West Virginia, over new rules increasing the amount of coal dust in the mines as well as the Widows’ Walk protest over black-lung benefits in 2002.”

Coal production in West Virginia is second only to Wyoming in a period where overall mine productivity continues to increase. Average mine productivity has gone up from 3.45 tons per labor-hour in 1989, to 6.44 tons in 1999—an 87 percent increase. According to the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA), there have been 21 fatalities in coal mining as of July this year—13 of them in Kentucky and West Virginia alone.

Francisco Picado is a member of UMWA Local 1984 in Rangely, Colorado. William West works at a mine in Arizona not yet organized by the union.

BY ARLENE RUBINSTEIN
AND MAURICE WILSON

CHICAGO—“We are not deepening, but radically changing, our course. Everywhere socialists are building fractions, we will work with other workers to strengthen the unions as fighting instruments of the working class. We will carry this out not just in union plants, but seek to work with others in organizing unions where they do not exist,” said Joel Britton here at a national meeting of members of the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists who work in slaughterhouses and meat processing plants across the United States. Participants in the August 2–3 gathering work in factories organized by the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) or in nonunion meatpacking plants.

This perspective builds on previous advances. “Today we are more connected with layers of our class who are on the receiving end of some of the more vicious attacks by the bosses and where there is a degree of resistance and the potential for workers to dig in their heels and fight,” Britton said.

“This gets us back to how the strategic fight for the unions to become fighting instruments of labor is critical to the struggle of the working class to take power,” said Wanda Lewis from Los Angeles who is working along with other workers to re-



Militant/Tony Lane (top); Jacob Perasso (left)

Above, coal miners attend Mine Safety and Health Administration hearings in Charleston, West Virginia, May 6, to oppose new rules on coal-dust levels that will cost workers’ lives. Left, solidarity rally with meat packers on strike against Tyson Foods in Jefferson, Wisconsin, June 22 drew 350 strikers and supporters. These unionists have been on strike for five months. Socialist industrial workers have become more integrated into the vanguard of these struggles.



talize the union at the Farmer John plant. A number of workers have begun to look for ways to rebuild the union in response to indiscriminate firings, increased line speed, and bathroom break restrictions imposed by the bosses.

“Orienting to the whole local union, not just our plant, will connect us to the broader labor movement,” said Britton. Many UFCW locals organize workers at a variety of plants and other facilities, including those in food and retail. Tim Frank from St. Paul, Minnesota, remarked that slaughterhouse workers who led the fight to organize and build UFCW Local 789 at Dakota Premium Foods “have a real opportunity to reach out to other fighters. That local is involved in a public fight for a contract at Borders bookstore, where workers recently voted in the UFCW, and has launched an organizing drive at the local Target department stores in the Twin Cities as part of its campaign to raise the wages, benefits, and dignity of retail workers.”

James Stone from Toronto pointed to opportunities in Canada to join with UFCW campaigns, from a unionization drive in southwest Ontario to the successful organization of the Wal-Mart store in Thompson, Manitoba—the first entire Wal-Mart store organized by the UFCW in North America.

Union taking on social questions

Britton noted that “the stance the labor movement is taking in support of the Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride will get quite a hearing” (see advertisement on page 5). Growing numbers of unions are supporting the rights of immigrants, he said. This stance helps in answering America First, rightist demagoguery, such as that espoused by Patrick Buchanan, who recently blamed the social crisis in California on free trade policies and “an unrepelled invasion from Mexico” of immigrant workers.

“The five-month-long strike by members of UFCW Local 538 against Tyson Foods is a fight with big stakes, not just for the 470 strikers,” said Britton. “The company is demanding deep cuts in wages and benefits.” The Solidarity Sunday Rally set for August 17 is the next opportunity to show support for the embattled union, he said (see ad on this page).

The union-organizing effort by workers at the giant Smithfield Foods hog-processing plant in Tar Heel, North Carolina, was also discussed. Participants decided to organize a team to visit Tar Heel to learn more about it and cover it in the *Militant*.

Ved Dookhun from Newark, New Jersey, drew on his recent experience as a participant in the Cuba-U.S. Youth Exchange delegation to Cuba. “Explaining the course of the Cuban Revolution to vanguard workers is at the center of building a revolutionary workers movement in this country,” he said.

Arlene Rubinstein and Maurice Wilson

are meat packers in Atlanta and Chicago, respectively.

BY MARY MARTIN
AND NANCY ROSENSTOCK

NEWARK, New Jersey—Socialist workers in the garment and textile industry met here August 2–3. They decided to make a sharp turn in their political work toward union organizing and mobilizing the structures of their union, UNITE, to the benefit of the membership.

James Harris from Atlanta pointed out in the main report that workers today are less weighed down by defeats of the past and many are looking to make links with other workers in struggle. This course of action was presented in “A Sea Change in Working-Class Politics,” the opening chapter of *Capitalism’s World Disorder* by SWP national secretary Jack Barnes.

Harris said that as the employers’ assault on the rights and living standards of the working class deepens, more and more workers are looking to the unions to defend and unify working people. Those who find themselves without a union in many workplaces are seeking ways to collectively organize one. These struggles will increasingly include defense of the unemployed, he said.

On July 30, for example, on the eve of the meeting, the textile giant Pillowtex announced that it is shutting down its North American operations, throwing its 7,500 employees, the majority of them textile workers, onto the streets. The plant shut-downs by the nation’s third-largest maker of towels and linens is causing devastation in some towns throughout the Carolinas (see front-page article).

“How do we fight for solutions for workers who have stopped getting paychecks?” asked Will Collins, who had worked for Pillowtex until a few months ago. “We are steered to apply to charities for help or sign up for short-term aid from the state. Yet many of us can be ruled ineligible if we have cars or other assets. One of my co-workers was told she would have to wait months for financial aid from the state because she had already received some aid once this year.” Collins said that the UNITE officials’ stance on Pillowtex is that “foreign competition” shut down the company and U.S. jobs are now overseas. “I don’t agree with that,” Collins said. “It’s the whole economic system of capitalism that’s in crisis worldwide and workers internationally are bearing the effects of it.”

Another former Pillowtex worker, Naomi Craine, said, “We need to use union power to organize the unemployed workers and to call for measures such as immediate relief in the form of cash aid and for a national unemployment insurance not tied to the company.”

Socialist garment and textile workers
Continued on Page 10

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U.S. youth meet Cuban social workers

BY PAUL PEDERSON

HAVANA—"When I finished high school I took the university entrance exams but couldn't get high enough scores to be admitted," said Josy García Ayala. "I spent a whole year just sitting around the house practically doing nothing. Then my neighbor told me how I could study at the school for social work and become involved in this movement. I signed up, and was able in this way to resume my studies. Now I'm also at the university studying history."

García Ayala was one of 25 graduates of the Social Workers Training School who participated in a July 28 meeting here at a community center in the Cayo Hueso (Key West) neighborhood of Havana. The meeting was attended by about 75 young people from the United States who were visiting the island as part of the Third Cuba-U.S. Youth Exchange.

Altogether, nearly 300 college and high school students and other youth from the United States took part in the one-week visit to Cuba, held July 23 to August 1. The purpose of the trip, sponsored by the Union of Young Communists (UJC), Federation of University Students (FEU), and other Cuban youth organizations, was to allow the U.S. visitors to learn firsthand about the Cuban Revolution today. In the course of the more than two-hour-long exchange, members of the social workers brigades spoke about the work they are doing in working-class neighborhoods such as Cayo Hueso.

The training and mobilization of thousands of revolutionary social workers across the country, they said, is part of an effort known here as the "Battle of Ideas," a political offensive spearheaded over the past three years by Cuba's revolutionary leadership. The aim of this campaign is to deepen the participation of working people and youth in Cuba's socialist revolution. Central to this effort, which encompasses more than 70 different programs, is broadening the access to culture and educational opportunities.

Through the Battle of Ideas, Cuba's communist leadership seeks to confront the imperialist ideological drive that promotes capitalism and its dog-eat-dog values. It also seeks to address the social inequalities that have sharpened as Cuba has become more exposed to the capitalist world market since the early 1990s, when it lost 85 percent of its foreign trade after the collapse of aid from and trade with the former Soviet Union and Eastern European workers states.

Among those most affected by the economic and social crisis are young people, including layers of teenagers who, after graduating from high school, are neither working nor studying. Some become alienated and get involved in hustling or petty crime.

In contrast with "social work" as organized by the capitalist rulers of the United States—who approach the hardest-hit layers of working people as potential criminals who must be policed and subjected to the most degrading methods of social engineering—the social workers campaign in Cuba seeks to involve young people in finding solutions to social problems in a way that reinforces the solidarity and confidence of the working class. This is possible in Cuba only because workers and farmers have made a revolution and hold state power.

The youth involved in the social workers program take an intensive six-month course at one of the Social Workers Training Schools, such as the one in Cojimar, East Havana. Then they begin working in communities around the country, learning firsthand about the social problems in some of the worst-off working-class neighborhoods and helping provide solutions to them.

Through this mobilization of social workers, many of these youth—who were born well after the January 1959 victory of the revolution—can identify with the ex-

periences of earlier generations of Cubans who were transformed by their participation in revolutionary activities such as the 1961 literacy campaign, through which tens of thousands volunteered to go into the countryside as teachers and helped wipe out illiteracy in Cuba.

"In Havana there were 109 [professional] social workers before this program began," said Norma Pérez, who heads the program in Havana. "They would mainly wait in community centers like the one we are meeting in today for people to come to them and tell them about their problems."

"Now there are 2,182 social workers in Havana. These young people go out into the community. They live among and get to know the families they are working with," Pérez explained. "They work together with them on problems they are facing."

The schools of social work were established "to solve two problems at once," Pérez said. "We take youth who weren't benefiting from all of the rights that the revolution offers and connect them with school and work again. The social workers go out into the community, evaluate the problems, criticize when government institutions aren't working properly, and offer solutions."

At the same time, the program gives these youth the opportunity to go to college. After the initial six-month training program, they are admitted to a six-year university program—carrying out social work in the community Monday through Friday while going to the university on Saturdays.

Pérez explained that when the program began in 2000, youth brigades conducted a broad survey of the entire population. It revealed that 186,000 Cubans between the ages of 16 and 30 were neither working nor in school, Pérez explained. Today, through this mass campaign, she reported that 132,000 of these youth have been integrated into classes that will train them to get jobs or prepare them to enter the university.

An army of social workers

In September 2000 the Cuban government opened the first Social Worker Training School in Cojimar. In February 2001, after completing a six-month course, the school graduated its first class of 513. Speaking at their graduation ceremony, Cuban president Fidel Castro described them as the first battalion of what would become an army of revolutionary social workers.

Today that army has swelled to more than 8,000 nationwide. Schools for training social workers have since been established in the cities of Villa Clara, Holguín, and Santiago. Another 5,000 are set to graduate from these schools in September.

Last year, thousands of graduates from



Militant/Above, Romina Green. Left, Paul Pederson Above, Cuban revolutionary social workers after July 28 meeting at Cayo Hueso community center, in Havana, with U.S. youth. Left, Eddie Torres, from Los Angeles (at right), speaking in discussion during the meeting.



these schools participated in a massive campaign to eradicate dengue fever, a sometimes deadly disease spread by mosquitoes that breed especially in unsanitary accumulations of water. Teams of students and graduates from the social work schools around the country went into communities, especially in Havana, the country's largest city, going block-by-block to improve the sanitary conditions and educate the entire population on the measures to be taken to reduce the spread of the disease. Unlike the epidemic conditions that developed in other tropical regions of Latin America, only a tiny handful of people died in Cuba from dengue fever.

One of the social workers told the story of her work with an elderly woman who lived on a pension of 90 pesos a month and was struggling to support a grandchild. The *brigadista* recommended that the woman's pension be increased, and it was raised to 200 pesos. She also involved her and her grandson in an initiative called the community dining halls.

Pérez explained that these dining halls were set up by the social work brigades to help those who have difficulty buying and preparing their own food, in particular the elderly and disabled. They also serve as an important link for those who need them to broader social activity.

This priority on the elderly is particularly important because of their growing numbers in Cuba. As a result of the improved social conditions brought about by the revolution, the average life expectancy of Cubans has increased to nearly 77—the highest in Latin America and comparable to life expectancy

in the most industrialized countries.

Another young social worker from the Playa district of Havana described her work with a young man who had committed a petty crime and was serving his sentence in his home. She helped him get involved in school and reported that he has since become the president of the student federation at his campus.

"This is the main way that we are confronting social problems like drug addiction and prostitution," said Pérez when asked about those problems by one of the visiting U.S. youth. "Two and a half years ago in Havana there were 22,000 young people who were neither working nor in school. We have gotten 13,000 of them off the streets and into the classroom through this effort."

"Before we began this program these problems weren't often discussed openly," she added. "Those addicted to drugs were afraid to go to the government for help. The social workers have achieved some important results where others could not. They are not linked to the police, and what they find out in the course of their work [such as use of illegal drugs] remains confidential. The social workers get to know these young people, win their confidence, and work with them to resolve these problems."

Participation in these campaigns is having a deep political impact on many youth. One indication Pérez pointed to is the fact that 60 percent of the current graduates of the schools of social work have joined the Union of Young Communists, which plays a central role in these initiatives and in the broader fight to advance Cuba's socialist revolution.

N.Y. event celebrates Moncada anniversary

BY OLGA RODRÍGUEZ

NEW YORK CITY—"The attack on the Moncada garrison, the assassination of more than a third of the combatants involved in the assault, and the violation of due process in the trials of those who survived sped up the development of a new revolutionary climate in Cuba," said Bruno Rodríguez, Cuban Ambassador to the United Nations. "This ended with the triumph of the revolution five and a half years later."

Rodríguez was the keynote speaker at a July 26 celebration here of the 50th anniversary of the attack on the Moncada barracks in Santiago de Cuba, the first battle in Cuba's revolutionary war. Some 700 people took part. The Martin Luther King Labor Center auditorium, in the Midtown Manhattan offices of the Hospital Workers Union Local 1199, was filled to capacity for the event. Other featured speakers included Rafael Cancel Miranda, a well-known Puerto Rican independence fighter, and Luis Miranda, president of Casa de las Americas, the oldest organization in New York of Cubans who support the revolution.

The event was organized by the July 26 Coalition, a group comprised of over 60 organizations and individuals. It was a successful, united-front effort by Cuba solidarity groups, political organizations,

and others in the area. Frank Velgara of the Vieques Support Campaign and Rosemari Mealy, who works for WBAI radio, co-chaired the meeting. Poets, musicians, and others joined the speakers on the platform for a fitting celebration of the act that opened the Cuban Revolution in 1953.

Rodríguez reviewed U.S. imperialism's 44-year-long drive to overthrow the revolution. "From the proclamation of the agrarian reform on May 17, 1959, the United States decided to destroy the revolution," he stated. Rodríguez said that the U.S. embargo had cost Cuba \$72 billion, not including another \$54 billion in losses caused by "terrorist acts against Cuba, promoted, organized and financed by Washington." Rodríguez denounced the recent anti-Cuba campaign by the Bush administration, including moves to eliminate licenses for travel to Cuba for "people-to-people exchanges."

The Cuban people, he continued, "are prepared to face the danger of U.S. military aggression. We know that the only way to avoid war is to be ready and determined to wage a fight to win.... As long as there is a Cuban, there will be resistance."

Rafael Cancel Miranda, who served 25 years in U.S. prisons for his actions in opposition to U.S. colonial rule of Puerto Rico, paid homage to the Cuban people and their communist leadership. Cancel

Miranda went to jail for two years when he was still a teenager for refusing to serve in the U.S. military during the Korean War. "If Washington had taught me how to use a rifle, I knew I was going to use it," he said. "But not against the Koreans."

Cancel Miranda lived in Cuba in the early 1950s. "I personally know both

Continued on Page 11

Contribute to 'Militant' Travel Fund

Two Militant reporters traveled to Cuba to provide first-hand coverage of the Third Cuba-U.S. Youth Exchange. Please contribute to help cover expenses of close to \$4,000 (see address on page 2).

CUBA and the
**COMING
AMERICAN
REVOLUTION**

by Jack Barnes

"There will be a victorious revolution in the United States before there will be a victorious counterrevolution in Cuba."

That statement, made by Fidel Castro in 1961, remains as accurate today as when it was spoken. This book, which is about the class struggle in the imperialist heartland, explains why. \$18

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Soviet power and bourgeois democracy

The following are excerpts from the *The German Revolution and the Debate on Soviet Power* published by Pathfinder Press. Part of the publisher's series "The Communist International in Lenin's Time," this is one of Pathfinder's books of the month in August. The selection is taken from a Jan. 21, 1919 article by V.I. Lenin titled, "Letter to the Workers of Europe and America," which is printed as a prologue to the book. Lenin was the central leader of the Bol-

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

sheviks and the October 1917 Russian Revolution. Copyright © 1986 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission.



BY V.I. LENIN

Comrades, at the end of my letter to American workers dated Aug. 20, 1918, I wrote that we are in a besieged fortress so long as the other armies of the world socialist revolution do not come to our aid....

Less than five months have passed since those words were written, and it must be said that during this time, in view of the fact that workers of various countries have turned to communism and Bolshevism, the maturing of the world proletarian revolution has proceeded very rapidly....

Now, on Jan. 12, 1919, we already see quite a number of communist proletarian parties, not only within the boundaries of the former tsarist empire—in Latvia, Finland and Poland, for example—but also

in Western Europe—Austria, Hungary, Holland and, lastly, Germany. The *foundation* of a genuinely proletarian, genuinely internationalist, genuinely revolutionary Third International, the *Communist International*, became a *fact* when the German Spartacus League, with such world-known and world-famous leaders, with such staunch working-class champions as [Karl] Liebknecht, Rosa Luxemburg, Clara Zetkin and Franz Mehring, made a clean break with socialists like Scheidemann and Südekum, social-chauvinists (socialists in words, but chauvinists in deeds) who have earned eternal shame by their alliance with the predatory, imperialist German bourgeoisie and Wilhelm II¹. It became a fact when the Spartacus League² changed its name to the Communist Party of Germany. Though it has not yet been officially inaugurated, the Third International actually exists.

No class-conscious worker, no sincere socialist can now fail to see how dastardly was the betrayal of socialism by those who... supported "their" bourgeoisie in the 1914–18 war. That war fully exposed itself as an imperialist, reactionary, predatory war both on the part of Germany and on the part of the capitalists of Britain, France, Italy and America. The latter are now beginning to quarrel over the spoils, over the division of Turkey, Russia, the African and Polynesian colonies, the Balkans, and so on....

Then, on Aug. 20, 1918, the proletarian revolution was confined to Russia, and "Soviet government", i.e., the system under which all state power is vested in Soviets of Workers', Soldiers' and Peasants' Deputies, still seemed to be (and actually was) only a Russian institution.

Now, on Jan. 12, 1919, we see a mighty "Soviet" movement not only in parts of the former tsarist empire, for example, in Latvia, Poland and the Ukraine, but also in West-European countries, in neutral countries (Switzerland, Holland and Norway) and in countries which have suffered from the war (Austria and Germany). The revolution in Germany...clearly shows how history has *formulated* the question in relation to Germany: "Soviet power" or the bourgeois parliament, no matter under what signboard (such as "National" or "Constituent" Assembly) it may appear....

"Soviet power" is the second historical step, or stage, in the development of the proletarian dictatorship. The first step was



Workers win support of soldiers at barracks in Berlin, Nov. 9, 1918, during German revolution that overthrew the kaiser. Placard says, "Brothers! Don't shoot!"

the Paris Commune. The brilliant analysis of its nature and significance given by Marx in his *The Civil War in France* showed that the Commune had created a *new type* of state, a *proletarian state*. Every state, including the most democratic republic, is nothing but a machine for the suppression of one class by another. The proletarian state is a machine for the suppression of the bourgeoisie by the proletariat. Such suppression is necessary because of the furious, desperate resistance put up by the landowners and capitalists, by the entire bourgeoisie and all their hangers-on, by all the exploiters, who stop at nothing when their overthrow, when the expropriation of the expropriators, begins.

The bourgeois parliament, even the most democratic in the most democratic republic, in which the property and rule of the capitalists are preserved, is a machine for the suppression of the working millions by small groups of exploiters. The socialists, the fighters for the emancipation of the working people from exploitation, had to utilise the bourgeois parliaments as a platform, as a base, for propaganda, agitation, and organisation *as long as our struggle was confined to the framework of the bourgeois system*: Now that world history has brought up the question of destroying the whole of that system, of overthrowing and suppressing the exploiters, of passing from capitalism to socialism, it would be a shameful betrayal of the proletariat, deserting to its class enemy, the bourgeoisie, and being a traitor and a renegade to confine oneself to

bourgeois parliamentarism, to bourgeois democracy, to present it as "democracy" in general, to obscure its *bourgeois* character, to forget that as long as capitalist property exists universal suffrage is an instrument of the bourgeois state.

¹In the first days of November 1918, while war still raged across Europe, German workers and soldiers rose in revolt, forming revolutionary councils across the country. Their uprising toppled the German Empire on November 9 and brought Germany's participation in the war to an abrupt end two days later, thereby halting the first world interimperialist slaughter. The overthrow of the regime of Wilhelm II, German kaiser and king of Prussia, coming a little more than a year after that of the Russian tsar, opened the second front in the struggle against the international imperialist system. It helped lessen the imperialists's attempts to isolate the Russian workers' and peasants' republic established under Bolshevik leadership in November 1917. Together with the Russian example, the German experience convinced millions of workers of the need for a new, Communist International.

²The Spartacus League had originated as a revolutionary current in the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD), initiating and spearheading opposition to the SPD majority leadership's open support in August 1914 to German imperialist war policy. When the workers overthrew the kaiser on Nov. 9, 1918, the main social-democratic currents formed a provisional government. The Spartacists advocated replacing this government with one resting on the mass-based councils of workers and soldiers formed during the uprising.

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August

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8

The Militant August 25, 2003

How low can they get?—Chicago cops have apologized for de-



Harry Ring

scribing a rape suspect as someone who “resembles” the rap star Ice Cube. The “report” was presented on TV and radio, with one playing

a video of Ice Cube.

Like stockbrokers?—“San Francisco: Supervisors approve fortune-teller licensing”—News headline.

Scoop of the week—“Employers holding back on pay raises”—News headline.

Nuthin’s perfect—General Motors will recall 240,000 Saturns and 95,000 Buick Rendezvous sport vehicles. The feds said a control computer in the Saturn and the Rendezvous has a faulty

rear latch that can be dangerous in a crash.

Cottage by the roadside—In the posh Beverly Hills area of L.A., a house is available for “about \$3.4 million.” The 4,300 square foot dwelling features a two-story living room. It has a glass and steel entry.

Cheerful note—Something called the Pension Benefit Guaranty Co. has voiced concern over the health of agencies which hold corporate pension funds. Plans that promise a specific monthly

sum on retirement are already underfunded \$300 billion.

A drop of justice—Girija Sujatha, from India, was brought to London where she worked 14-hour days as a servant. Her pay was less than \$2.50 an hour. Her employers have been ordered to compensate her about \$60,000 damages. Not surprisingly, they haven’t gone to jail.

Nothing’s too good—CHEYENNE, Wyoming—Part of a 17,000-acre ranch the city acquired in part to bolster its water

supply is contaminated with TCE. “The Air Force used the colorless liquid to clean Atlas E ballistic missiles’ fuel tanks 40 years ago. Drinking or breathing TCE can cause nervous system, liver and lung damage and abnormal heart beat”—*USA Today*.

Unionists, students, all else—A warm welcome to new subscribers and a bid to join the clipping club which keeps this column going. Send clipping to Great Society c/o Pathfinder Books, 4229 S. Central Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90011. Many thanks.

C&H sugar workers make gains in 2-week strike

BY DEBORAH LIATOS

CROCKETT, California—Refinery workers here, members of Sugar Workers Union Local 1, ratified a contract with C&H Sugar Co. by a 149-98 vote July 20. Workers ended the two-week strike after winning a number of their demands and coming out of the fight more united.

The walkout by 388 union members won wide support from area unionists and other workers and included several spirited rallies. The 100 warehouse workers at C&H who belong to International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) Local 6 honored the picket line.

During the walkout C&H threatened to end health coverage weeks earlier than agreed in the event of a strike. “The loss of medical benefits isn’t an inconvenience. It threatens peoples’ lives,” said Donald Trigg, a millwright with two artificial heart valves after a triple bypass. Medication alone costs about \$2,500 a month, he estimated.

“The company moved off its last final offer because of the strength shown, especially the July 16 rally. That day they delayed and diverted trucks,” said Joe Palacio, Local 1 business agent.

The Sugar Workers Union held a rally of 200 in front of the plant July 16 in response to company efforts to organize cops to escort trucks through the picket lines. “This is the first time they tried to run trucks during a strike,” said Gary Black who has worked at C&H for 30 years and is a refinery operator. There have been four strikes in 29 years.

“The contract includes a 9 percent wage increase over three years, with a cost-of-living increase; credit of up to \$100 for those who retire over the next three years; and \$20

pretax deduction per payday for health care,” Palacio said. The company had offered an 8 percent wage raise, and up to \$30 out of the biweekly paychecks, depending on the health plan, up from \$8 in the past.

“Our main concern is the pension and medical benefits,” said Sashwani Harrison while picketing. “One-third of the workforce is about to retire.” Harrison joined with employees of auto dealerships July 12 in a rally called by the Central Labor Council of Contra Costa County. Automotive Machinists and Teamsters on strike are demanding to be paid for an eight-hour day instead of piece rates, permanent work instead of temporary jobs, and health benefits. “The mechanics are paid by the car,” said Janice Kelley, who has worked at C&H for 10 months.

“I was surprised. I didn’t think we’d be so united,” said Robert Lynn who works in packaging and has been at C&H for four years. “It’s a bigger picture than a few dollars. This is not just about our contract but the world. We need to make a change. Corporate America’s attitude toward their workers is completely going in the wrong direction. There was a time in this country when the philosophy was to treat the employee well. Now it’s take, take, take.”

C&H workers include Latinos, Blacks, and immigrants from India. There are a significant number of women. Many unionists noted the role they played during the walkout.

“We need more women on the picket line,” said Marion Berry, a machine operator and mechanic at C&H for 36 years. “They’re more intimidating than a man. It makes us stronger. I’ve seen women do things they never did before.”



Bulwinder Singh takes turn on picket line during strike against C&H, in mid July.

“The women work alongside men. There’s equal pay,” said Jon Nelson, a maintenance worker with 37 years in the plant. “The old cube station was all women before it went automated. During World War II, when the men went off to war, women ran this place.”

“World War II—that’s when women proved they’re equal, if not better,” said Lynn. “I wouldn’t have known if I hadn’t worked with so many women.”

The company promised there will be no layoffs. A six-week strike in 1995 ended with the layoff of 170 workers. “Everyone out on disability who was on the picket line got amnesty,” said Larry. “There is a lot of overtime and with long hours and shift work you’re going to get hurt, so there are a lot of

people on disability.”

“In 1970 we had a good strike. Between 1,200 and 1,300 people worked for C&H then,” said Palacio. “They are running a little more production now than then but with one person doing a job that used to be done by four,” said Berry.

C&H agreed not to pursue disciplinary action against workers on disability or members who staffed picket lines, union officials said. Guards from C&H’s security contractor during the strike, Ohio-based PSS, filmed a rally in what workers said was preparation to fire strikers.

“They wanted to bust this union,” said John King, a union steward. “This isn’t the end of it. We’ll have to face it again in three years. Let’s stay united. We are the union.”

150 demonstrate in Boston to protest attack on gay couple

BY ELLEN BRICKLEY

BOSTON—On July 26, more than 150 people marched and rallied here to protest a recent brutal assault on a lesbian couple. The protesters assembled at Maverick train station, in East Boston, and marched to Piers Park, where the assault took place. Boston Lesbian Avengers, a gay rights group, organized the action.

On July 4, Lisa Craig and her partner Debby Riley were watching the fireworks display with their young daughters. Throughout the evening they were verbally harassed by a group of young people. “All night they’d walk by us and giggle and laugh, ‘Look at those dykes,’” Craig told the *Boston Globe* following the incident. “We were just in the park, watching the fireworks just like everyone else.”

At the end of the evening, while the couple and their children were buying ice cream, their five-year-old daughter was shoved by one of the teens who had been harassing them. Craig then confronted the group. She was punched, fell to the ground, and was then kicked in the head. Her pocketbook was stolen. Following the attack, Craig was rushed to Massachusetts General Hospital where she underwent two surgeries to drain blood from her brain and received 200 stitches.

A Massachusetts Port Authority (Massport) police officer arrived on the scene. According to Riley, the cop made no arrests, simply telling the assailants to “get out of here now before I arrest you all.” The Massport police report states: “The

crowd, numbering approximately 20 teen-aged males and females, were hostile and verbally threatening the victim, her child, a friend of the victim, and her child.”

A Boston police report on the incident, cited in a community newspaper the East Boston *Sun Transcript*, differed radically from both the Massport police report and the story told by the victims of this attack. Making no mention of the hostile crowd yelling antigay slurs, the Boston police claimed that a young Latino woman had snatched Craig’s purse while she was standing at the ice cream truck, and ran off on foot. Craig tried to chase the woman, said the Boston cops, but she slipped and fell in the street. While Craig was on the ground, the report claims that the lone assailant kicked her once in the head and then ran off on foot.

On July 16, a 15-year-old girl was charged for the assault. Suffolk County district attorney Daniel Conley told the *Boston Globe*, “The juvenile struck the victim, Lisa Craig, with her fist, causing Ms. Craig to fall and strike her head on a granite curbing.”

Several candidates for the Boston City Council took part in the July 26 action, including Laura Garza, Socialist Workers candidate for City Council, at-large. “The attackers are on the wrong side of history as shown by the recent Supreme Court rulings upholding affirmative action and overturning sodomy laws,” Garza said in an interview. “By waging a fight around social causes, rights can be established regardless of who the lawmakers or judges are.”

— 25 AND 50 YEARS AGO —

THE MILITANT

PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE
NEW YORK, N.Y. FIVE (5) CENTS

August 24, 1953

The protest filed by the Socialist Workers Party against its redesignation on the U.S. Attorney General’s “subversive” list has been arbitrarily rejected by the Eisenhower administration.

As National Secretary of the SWP, I [Farrell Dobbs] had sent a formal notice of contest to the Department of Justice. According to the SWP attorneys, the notice complied with all the regulations prescribed by the Attorney General for challenging the “subversive” designation under the new Eisenhower “security” order.

The Attorney General, in his reply, challenged my authority as the executive officer of the party and ruled the protest invalid.

This crude violation of the constitutional rights of the SWP provides a new demonstration of the hypocritical policy of the Eisenhower administration. It represents a cynical flaunting of U.S. Supreme Court rulings concerning the legal rights of those victimized by the witch hunters.

The “subversive” blacklist, which is perpetuated and extended under the Eisenhower “security” order, was originated in 1947 by the Truman administration. It quickly became the principal instrument for attacks on political opponents by the party in power. Scores of organizations were stigmatized “subversive” by the Truman regime. None of the victims were informed of the charges against them. They were denied the right to confront their ac-

cusers or to have any kind of a hearing. Meanwhile they were publicly smeared in the newspapers and through television witch-hunting orgies by Congressional committees.



September 1, 1978

Israeli warplanes bombed Palestinian civilian refugee centers in Lebanon August 21. The early-morning Zionist attack left four people dead and forty injured. The Israeli government claimed it murdered these civilians in retribution for a Palestinian commando attack on an El Al Airlines bus in London.

But the Israeli raid only underscores the Zionists’ hypocrisy on the eve of a new round of U.S.-sponsored Mideast peace talks scheduled to open September 5.

The U.S. government claims it is neutral in these talks and has the best interests of both Arabs and Israelis at heart. Thus, Washington suggests to Egyptian President Anwar el-Sadat that it might force Israel to return some of the Arab land it occupies. But only if Sadat will make some concessions to the Zionists.

Carter’s real goal, however, is not forcing Israeli concessions but protecting the interests of U.S. corporations in the Middle East. Washington knows that Israel is its most dependable launching pad for the military defense of these interests from the Arab masses.

Fight for jobs for all!

The situation facing the 7,500 workers who lost their jobs with the shutdown of the North Carolina-based textile giant Pillowtex is an important question for the entire working class and demands action by the labor movement on behalf of these workers.

UNITE—which these workers succeeded in bringing in as their union four years ago after a 25-year struggle—and other unions need to fight for government measures to provide immediate relief to these workers and protect them from the brutal consequences of the normal operations of the capitalist economy.

Demands must be placed on the state and federal governments to provide cash relief to supplement existing unemployment benefits for as long as workers stay jobless—without the indignities of “means testing” requirements policed by social investigators—and to extend the workers’ medical coverage for the same period.

A look at the broader picture reveals that this is not a problem unique to Pillowtex or the Carolinas. Hundreds of thousands of workers have been losing their jobs in recent years, especially in industry. Since January 2001, some 2.6 million manufacturing jobs have been eliminated in the United States, including nearly 300,000 in garment and textile. Under these conditions, working people face two basic economic afflictions of declining capitalism—unemployment and high prices—that need to be addressed through struggles for demands that protect the interests of the working class as a whole.

At the heart of the fight for jobs for all is the demand for a sliding scale of hours—a shorter workweek with no cut in pay—to spread the available work around and tie together both those employed and jobless in the solidarity of mutual responsibility. At the same time, public works programs are needed to create jobs as well as to fix the deteriorating infrastructure and meet other pressing social needs such as child care, housing, and improved public education.

As a measure to defend incomes against rising prices, which can become devastating as Washington’s predatory wars abroad multiply and the economic crisis deepens, working people need a sliding scale of wages—cost-of-living adjustments to make up for increased prices of consumer goods and other necessities that eat up a greater portion of meager paychecks.

Affirmative action programs are also needed to combat racist and sex discrimination in hiring and layoffs and minimize divisions in the working class fostered by the employers.

One shining example from working-class history of how the unions can lead such a course with great success is the Federal Workers Section of Teamsters Local 574 during the Minneapolis strikes of the 1930s, described vividly in the Pathfinder book *Teamster Politics* by Farrell Dobbs, one of the main protagonists of those struggles (see ad below). It points to how unions solidly backed and organized the unemployed, countering the bosses’ use of joblessness to divide our class. Unemployed workers helped staff Teamsters pickets during walkouts while unionized truck drivers helped the unemployed organizations.

Labor militants must also take on arguments by bosses and

capitalist politicians—often echoed by the top labor officialdom—that seek to confuse workers about the causes of the Pillowtex failure and what to do about it. The textile barons say the main problem is “foreign imports” and “unfair competition” from cheap fabrics and clothing—especially from the U.S. employers’ competitors in China, Vietnam, and countries of the Third World.

The U.S. capitalists thus seek to justify their own protectionist barriers and get workers and farmers to support our exploiters, the employers. In reality, working people in city and countryside face the same enemy around the world: the owners of Pillowtex, Cargill, Dupont, and other capitalist monopolies. Workers at Pillowtex and exploited farmers in this country have common interests with Vietnamese catfish farmers and small cotton producers in Burkina Faso devastated by protectionist U.S. tariffs—as well as with garment and textile workers in Thailand or the Dominican Republic who are fighting against starvation wages.

Bosses and capitalist politicians also argue that immigrants from Mexico and elsewhere are taking “American jobs.” This is another part of the divide-and-rule tactic. There is much broader understanding among the U.S. working class today, however, that anti-immigrant prejudice is deadly for labor. That is why protests against assaults on immigrant workers, like the recent rightist-backed firebombing of the house of a family of Mexican day laborers in Long Island, New York, strike a chord of solidarity among wider layers of working people.

The same understanding of the need for class solidarity can be extended across borders. That’s why unions must demand canceling the foreign debt of Third World countries that are chained to debt bondage by finance capital.

Plant shutdowns and rising joblessness are endemic to capitalism, which is in the midst of a worldwide crisis that has its roots in the declining average rate of industrial profit that started in the early 1970s. In their drive for profits, the bosses worldwide have used “too much” productive capacity—too much, that is, according to what they can sell at a sufficient profit for them. Now they are slashing that capacity and competing more fiercely among themselves around the globe to divide and redivide the world’s markets. That’s the source of the problem at Pillowtex.

Demands such as the ones presented above will be met by property owners and their accountants with cries of being “unrealistic,” especially at times of economic contraction. But what is realizable or not depends ultimately on the relationship of forces. The question posed sharply by mass layoffs is the defense of the proletariat from decay, demoralization, and ruin. If capitalism is unable to meet the demands that inevitably arise from the calamities it generates, then let it perish. More working-class militants can be aided today to perceive the essence of an outlived capitalism—they can learn that the existing problems, like the Pillowtex layoffs, are not incidental or episodic, but rather the consequence of a deep structural crisis of the system. They can then see why labor and its allies must take governmental power away from the capitalists and place it in our own hands.

UNITE

Continued from Page 6

decided to visit the Kannapolis, North Carolina, area to find out the facts and discuss with laid-off Pillowtex workers ways to confront the devastation of joblessness.

Abby Tilsner from Newark spoke about the organizing effort that UNITE and the Teamsters are carrying out at Cintas, the largest uniform producer and industrial laundry in North America. Socialists are joining with Cintas workers and others to build support for this campaign.

Participants discussed the challenge before garment workers in relatively small shops not organized by the union.

Maggie Trowe from Boston said, “Workers operating machinery in the textile mills and sewing plants in garment are at the heart of the industry and it is from these workers that the bosses extract the surplus value. They need the union.”

A garment worker from Miami described the recent victory by workers who are fighting for union recognition and a contract at Point Blank, one of the largest clothing manufacturers in southern Florida. A recent National Labor Relations Board ruling cited the company for firing three unionists, and locking out hundreds of workers last year as part of its efforts to prevent workers there from organizing themselves into UNITE. Point Blank was ordered to cease and desist from offering bribes or threatening workers not to join the union and forced to pay back wages.

Laura Garza from Boston spoke about the upcoming Immigrant Workers Freedom Ride. “Many immigrant workers see this mobilization,” Garza said, “as a show of their potential power to win more legal status and rights.”

Another participant pointed out that the victory of Róger Calero against attempts by the U.S. government to deport him received support from many rank-and-file UNITE members and officials. This support is another indication of the necessity and possibility that exists today to mobilize the union to defend the working class.

Mary Martin and Nancy Rosenstock are sewing machine operators in Des Moines, Iowa, and Newark, respectively.

Sub renewal

Continued from front page

responded to Calero’s incarceration by the INS by signing petitions and collecting funds,” she said in a note accompanying three sub renewals (see page 4 for coverage on the Calero case).

A similar response from fellow unionists on the job and other workers who subscribed recently is noted elsewhere. In Omaha two readers of *PM* at the Swift meatpacking plant decided to renew this week. One of them has been reading *PM* for over two years, reported Jacob Perraso.

Jenny Benton reports from Twin Cities, Minnesota, that a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 789 renewed subscriptions to both the *Militant* and *PM*. He supported the fight of Róger Calero against deportation and spoke at a meeting that was part of Calero’s “Fight to Win” tour stop there co-sponsored by the union.

In New York, partisans of the socialist press got eight renewals from *Militant* and *PM* subscribers last week. That puts them within striking range of both local goals. They got a good response over the August 10–11 weekend picking up several renewals after phone calls to subscribers. Sales teams included a visit to Long Island to talk to day laborers in Farmingville, where protests have taken place against an anti-immigrant firebombing. Another team visited a neighborhood in Brooklyn where police raided an apartment August 4 and shot an unarmed woman.

These examples point to the potential to hit the targets by August 17, when the campaign ends. The overall goal is to get 225 *Militant* and 80 *PM* readers to renew their subscriptions. During this last week of the drive all supporters are urged to send in daily updates. The *Militant* will bring the scoreboard up to date as soon as reports come in and post it on its website on a daily basis. With a concerted effort, victory is in sight.

Moscow, Beijing press north Korea

Continued from front page

to be solved,” said U.S. secretary of state Colin Powell a few days after north Korea accepted the demand for six-way talks. He listed Washington’s objections to DPRK’s nuclear weapons development program and repeated allegations that Pyongyang is conducting an “illegal drug trade” and “weapons proliferation,” reported Agence France-Presse.

Earlier U.S. president George Bush said, “We are hopeful that (DPRK president) Mr. Kim Jong Il... will make a decision to totally dismantle his nuclear weapons program.”

Over the last year the U.S. government has stepped up its threats and aggressive actions against north Korea, described by Bush as being part of an “axis of evil” along with Iraq and Iran. Washington cut off promised shipments of food and fuel last October. The Japanese and south Korean governments quickly followed suit. These shipments had been negotiated earlier, when Pyongyang agreed to use its nuclear facility at Yongbyon purely for energy purposes and to allow United Nations inspectors on the premises to verify this. As Washington and Tokyo reneged, the DPRK expelled the inspectors, withdrew from the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, and announced it was developing nuclear weapons.

At the beginning of this year the Pentagon reinforced its air

power in the region, stationing 24 nuclear-capable bombers on Guam within striking distance of the DPRK. More recently the U.S. government announced plans to redeploy its 2nd Infantry Division southward, freeing the U.S. command to launch attacks against the north without having its ground forces become targets of retaliatory artillery fire.

The talks in late August are scheduled to begin a couple of weeks after the annual Ulchi Focus Lens exercises, which involve almost 80,000 U.S. and south Korean troops. Using computer simulations and on-the-ground maneuvers, the war games follow a script of large-scale fighting with DPRK forces.

Recent U.S. military drills have sparked protests by hundreds of south Korean youth at military facilities in Seoul and between the capital and the so-called demilitarized zone that divides the Korean peninsula. The latter include the bases at Yonchen and Pochun. The students demanded the withdrawal of the U.S. troops from south Korean soil.

Pyongyang defended protesters who were arrested after having “trespassed” on the bases, and demanded the immediate pullout of all U.S. forces from Korea. Such a move, it said, was necessary for “the peace of Korea, the security of the Korean nation and its independent reunification.”

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Nicaragua peasants march for land, credit

Continued from Page 3

Nicaragua took power out of the hands of the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Anastasio Somoza through a popular insurrection led by the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN). A land reform was among the first measures of the revolutionary government. Farms belonging to rich landowners who had supported the Somoza regime were confiscated and land was distributed to those without it.

This land reform, however, and other measures to combat the exploitation of rural producers unfolded in stages, with retreats, and was never completed. By the end of the 1980s, a large part of agricultural production remained in capitalist hands, which meant that previous government measures to provide cheap credit and farm supplies often boosted the profits of wealthy landowners while neither increasing agricultural investment and output nor substantially improving the peasants' lot. Over time, the FSLN leadership retreated even from the partial early measures that benefited the rural toilers, which were along a revolutionary course.

Throughout much of the 1980s, the workers and farmers government that came to power in 1979 faced a counterrevolutionary war. The *contras*, as they became known, were a guerrilla army largely organized and financed by Washington, which recruited heavily in the countryside taking advantage of erroneous policies of the FSLN regime. Nicaragua's working people militarily defeated the *contras* by 1987. But the seven-year-long war had a wearing impact on workers and farmers. The FSLN leadership used this as a justification for making more concessions to local capitalists and landlords and to U.S. imperialism. By the end of the 1980s, the FSLN leadership placed increasingly long-term reliance on the workings of the capitalist market. The FSLN had transformed itself into a radical bourgeois electoral party. In 1990 the FSLN lost the elections to a coalition of capitalist parties headed by Violeta Chamorro.

By that time, there were still 60,000 landless peasants. Those who had land often lacked credit, seeds, fertilizer, and tools, while capitalist landowners dominated agriculture in many parts of the country. Under the Chamorro regime and subsequent capitalist governments many state-owned farms were leased with an option to buy to form cooperatives or were returned to their former owners.

Matagalpa, the coffee-growing center of Nicaragua, has been especially hard hit in recent years. Wages for some workers have dropped to \$1 a day. In the 1990s coffee prices were still relatively high. But after Brazil, the largest coffee producer in the world, increased its output and Vietnam entered the market with massive quantities, the price plummeted. Prices dropped to 50 cents a pound in 2001–2002, compared to an average of \$1.20 in the 1980s.

Agence France Presse reports that peasants started heading to Matagalpa a month and a half ago when their food reserves ran out. That's where the 13-day-long march started. Unemployment and underemployment is estimated at 53 percent in this Central American nation.

There are currently 12 farms involved in land disputes, according to Alfonso Sandino, a government minister. Some farms have been occupied by landless peasants, while the owners are demanding their return.

Farm workers took over the Las Golondrinas farm, which in turn has been claimed by a U.S. owner. In a compromise worked out between Managua and the U.S. State Department, those workers are being given other land.

Three groups have occupied the La Empresa farm: ex-*contras*, discharged soldiers of the army, and farm workers.

The march stopped outside Managua, at El Tuma-La Dalia, August 5 as peasant leaders and government officials began negotiations.

According to *La Prensa*, march leaders at first wanted plots of land distributed as part of an "agrarian reform" but agreed to a payment plan for some 7,500 manzanas (about 13,000 acres) of state-owned land.

The Spanish news agency EFE reported August 11 that peasants and farm workers declared their march over August 9.



Reuters/Oswaldo Rivas

Thousands of Nicaraguan peasants and farm workers march to Matagalpa, August 1, some 70 miles north of Managua, the capital.

The same day, thousands of rural toilers occupying land in northern Nicaragua ended sit-down strikes. Peasant leaders and government representatives reportedly came to an agreement on several of the peasants' demands. The accord includes the government giving land titles to some 2,500 rural families, selling them the land at 40 percent of its value recorded in the official registry, with payments extending over 20 years. These are largely lands that peasants already used, as part of cooperatives set up in the 1980s.

New York event celebrates Moncada

Continued from Page 7

Cubas," he said. "I lived in the Cuba of the prostitution, gambling houses, and corruption and had the honor of being thrown out of Cuba by [dictator Fulgencio] Batista. So, you see, Batista put me in jail, while Fidel embraced me!" he said, referring to Cuban president Fidel Castro. Canceled Miranda saluted Luis Rosa, who was in the audience, another Puerto Rican *independentista* who spent many years in Washington's jails. He also urged participants to fight for freedom of the Cuban Five. These are five Cuban militants serving draconian sentences in U.S. jails on frame-up charges brought by Washington that include conspiracy to commit espionage. "Washington cannot destroy the spirit of July 26, just as it cannot destroy those five men," Canceled Miranda said. "As long as they're in prison, we are all in prison." He added, "One minute given in the fight for dignity is worth a lifetime."

Teresa Gutierrez gave greetings on behalf of the National Committee to Free the Five. She outlined a campaign to press the U.S. government to grant entry visas to Olga Salanueva, wife of René González, and Adriana Pérez, wife of Gerardo Hernández, to visit their husbands—two of Cuban Five. The two women have been

denied entry to the United States three times.

A taped message from jailed African-American journalist Mumia Abu Jamal was played at the meeting. Nellie Hester Bailey, co-chair of Cuba Solidarity New York, read a message from jailed Palestinian activist Farouk Abdel-Muhti (see article on page 4).

New York solidarity work

Luis Miranda also addressed the meeting. Miranda explained how Casa de las Americas got started. In 1955 a group of Cuban activists, who later formed Casa, organized a New York tour for a young Fidel Castro. The purpose of the tour was to win supporters for the July 26 Movement and for the revolutionary struggle underway in Cuba. "Fidel wasn't yet a commander, but an individual just released from Batista's jails," Miranda said, after an international amnesty campaign to free those jailed for the assault on Moncada. "You could already see in him a leader with a vision, the long view, and ideas that some thought were crazy."

The Cuban émigré community in New York, he said, was reluctant to get involved in politics at first, as most had come to New York escaping harsh conditions in Cuba and the brutality of the U.S.-backed

dictatorship.

"The one who changed that, the one who instilled in us the confidence in victory was Fidel," Castro, he continued, "was the only person to put forward an action program for the revolution contained in *History Will Absolve Me*," his courtroom speech that was smuggled out of prison and published and distributed widely. Castro's 1955 tour helped organize the July 26 Movement in New York and Connecticut, he stated.

Miranda said that local supporters of the July 26 Movement, which led the struggle to overthrow Batista along with the Rebel Army headed by Castro, got a lot of help at the time from Puerto Rican militants and others organized in the Fair Play for Cuba Committee.

He singled out Cuba's proletarian internationalism as one of the revolution's main accomplishments, including the 300,000 volunteers who went to Angola over two decades to help defeat invasions of that country by the racist apartheid regime of South Africa. "Cuba went to Africa to help, not to pillage," he said.

"Washington imposed the blockade on Cuba," he concluded, "because of its accomplishments, and because we achieved true independence. That is what we defend today."

In New International no. 9

The Rise and Fall of the Nicaraguan Revolution

by Jack Barnes, Larry Seigle, & Steve Clark

Lessons from the workers and farmers government that came to power in Nicaragua in July 1979. \$14.00

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LETTERS

Irish republican deported

Below is an item in regard to the John McNicholl deportation. This represents the position of local Irish immigrant rights supporters and Irish republican supporters in Philadelphia.

Roy Inglee
Delaware

I witnessed my father being kidnapped by strange men from our front door and bundled into an unmarked car. Can someone from the Bush Administration explain what we are to do, now that they have deported our father? Where is the justice in the Justice Department of the U.S. for my family and me? ...

Our dad explained to us the harassment his family suffered at the hands of the Royal Ulster Constabulary. A police force that only protected the interests of the loyalist and unionist community. The British government is known to have colluded with loyalists in the murder of nationalists and particularly human rights lawyers.

Dad was a member of the Northern Ireland Civil Rights

Association. Aren't civil rights something worth achieving and defending? The RUC were intent on framing my father, so they said he was involved in terrorist activity and planted weapons where they arrested him. My father escaped from the prison to which he was taken, because he knew that—like many others in Northern Ireland back then—they would have imprisoned him for most of his life for something he didn't do.

We demand that our father be returned.

Sean McNicholl

[John McNicholl, an Irish Republican activist who entered the United States in the mid-1980s, was deported by the U.S. government to the United Kingdom on July 18. He had escaped from the infamous Maze Prison near Belfast, Northern Ireland, in 1976 where he was being held on frame-up charges of having killed an RUC cop and wounded another. He was deported after being arrested outside his home in Philadelphia as he headed to work. McNicholl had been ap-

pealing a deportation order since 1997.—Editor]

Haddad deportation

In a previous letter, "Haddad Deported," I concluded, with undue pessimism, that "it looks like he will now be in prison in Lebanon." Although agents took him from U.S. prison to the plane in complete secrecy, his FBI escorts on the plane allowed him to make a collect phone call midway to Lebanon to his wife in Ann Arbor, who alerted family and friends to meet him at Beirut airport. At the time I wrote the letter, Haddad's mother in Lebanon was waiting 4–6 hours after the plane arrived while he was apparently being interrogated by Lebanese authorities.

The U.S. government has announced that it will deport 13,000 immigrants from among the 86,000 Middle Eastern males over 16 who complied with required interrogations by INS.

As the wife of Rabih Haddad, the founder of a Muslim charity seized by Federal Authorities in response to 9/11, Sulaima Rushaid has been

a quiet symbol of standing up for one's rights with dignity during these mass deportations. The deportation of Sulaima Rushaid, Haddad's wife, and children, a week later, was more public than the secret "disappearance" to Amsterdam of Haddad himself. The Free Rabih Haddad Defense Committee had a rally of about 50 people outside the Detroit Immigration Building, and Rabih Haddad spoke to supporters through a cell phone hook-up.

Denis Hoppe

Ann Arbor, Michigan

Black unemployment

I found the article on black unemployment to have a confusing statement. "If they had stopped trying, the government would have stopped including them in their calculations." As far as I know there is not a national poll on who is looking for work. The government calculates who is "looking" for work according to who is on the unemployment rolls. These figures always grossly understate the number of true unemployed. They can also be just plain wrong, as was the

case recently where unemployment went "down" from 6.4 percent to 6.2 percent. The new figure did not represent people not looking for work or getting jobs (job losses went up!), but that unemployment checks are running out for many before they can find a job.

Rick Young
Chicago, Illinois

[Official statistics count not only those who receive unemployment benefits or who have filed claims for unemployment insurance. The Bureau of Labor Statistics conducts a monthly population survey that attempts to include those looking for work, like, for example, those registered with state unemployment services as seeking employment.—Editor]

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people.

Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

Protests greet Chirac in S. Pacific

In New Caledonia and Tahiti working people show outrage at French colonial rule

BY ANNALUCIA VERMUNT

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand—French president Jacques Chirac paid a visit to Paris’s South Pacific colonies in late July, wrapping up his trip by hosting a meeting of regional governments in French Polynesia’s capital Papeete. French Polynesia is a French colony comprised of 118 islands and atolls, the largest of which is Tahiti.

Intended as a demonstration of French imperialist weight in the region, Chirac’s tour was tarnished a little by Kanak opponents of French rule during his visit to New Caledonia, another French colonial possession in the region, and by protests in Tahiti during his visit there. In New Caledonia, pro-independence forces greeted the French president with a protest strike and two days of demonstrations.

On July 23 Chirac defended New Caledonia’s colonial status before a rally in Noumea, the capital. The crowd was estimated at 15,000 people by the daily newspaper *Les Nouvelles Calédoniennes*.

“The collective interest... is not in separatism and withdrawal, but in being part of a larger community,” Chirac argued. “Despite yesterday’s disagreements and today’s debates, despite difficulties caused by cultural differences and social inequality, New Caledonia is carving out a unique destiny in France and the Pacific.”

Some 2,000 people joined the protest rally organized by the Kanak and Exploited Workers Union (USTKE). “Chirac, don’t forget you have Kanak blood on your hands,” read one banner—a reference to killings of Kanak leaders by French troops during a pro-independence upsurge in the mid-1980s. At that time Paris occupied the country with 10,000 troops.

“The protesters said Chirac was unwelcome,” reported the Reuters news agency. “Some called on him to free jailed French farmer activist Jose Bové”—who made headlines by leading attacks on McDonalds outlets in France—“or berated him for French testing in the Pacific.”

Following the rally, leaders of the USTKE said they would stay on strike for the remainder of Chirac’s three-day visit. The union’s members are mostly workers from the Kanak nationality, the indigenous people of the island who number some 46 percent of New Caledonia’s 196,000 people.

Continuing his “larger community” theme, Chirac used his visit to Noumea to pull the plug on a census in New Caledonia that had been planned for the week following his visit. References in the survey’s questions to ethnic origins were “outrageous,” he said. “There’s only one reply to such a question and that is you are all French and there are French people of all ethnic origins.” Census officials promptly announced that the census would be postponed for a year, allowing changes to be made.

More Kanak protests

Chirac faced more Kanak protesters the next day during a welcome ceremony at Kone in the North Province, which, along with the Loyalty Islands, is one of the two regions governed by the Kanak Socialist National Liberation Front. The Southern Province, which includes Noumea and is by far the wealthiest of the three, is headed by the pro-Paris Rally for Caledonia within the Republic.

As the French president listened to the official welcome by pro-independence spokesman Paul Neaoutyine, chants of “Chirac murderer” from Kanak protesters were countered by shouts of “We are with you Chirac.” Police fired tear gas at the demonstrators but the winds blew it back towards the official ceremony.

The Kanak protesters demanded that the French government honor the 1998 Noumea accord, which assigned the government of New Caledonia power over its own affairs, excluding aspects of foreign



Pro-independence protests during July visit by French president Jacques Chirac to New Caledonia, a French colony in South Pacific. Above, cops tear gas protesters in city of Kone, July 24. Left, protest in country’s capital Noumea. Banner reads “May 5, 1988, Chirac do you remember?” referring to date when French troops killed independence fighters there.

policy and military matters, the legal system, and the printing of money. The accord also postponed the promised referendum on independence until sometime between 2014 and 2018.

Chirac later took part in a meeting to discuss nickel-mining projects in the region. New Caledonia is the world’s third-largest producer of nickel, with an estimated quarter of the world’s reserves. The country also has substantial military value as the site of three French military bases.

French Polynesia also plays a key part in maintaining Paris’s strategic military capability, including its development of a

nuclear arsenal. For years, nuclear weapons were tested above and then below ground at Moruroa Atoll, until tests were finally stopped in 1996.

In French Polynesia Oscar Temaru, head of the political party Tavini Huiraatira and mayor of Faa’a, the colony’s most populous town, refused to join official welcoming ceremonies. “The arrival of the President of the Republic, welcomed like a king in French Polynesia, is a provocation,” he said. Temaru’s party joined with other partisans of independence, including unionists and former workers in the nuclear industry, to protest Chirac’s visit.

According to the *New Zealand Herald*, the French president “saluted French Polynesia’s role in safeguarding national security by allowing France to conduct nuclear tests in the Pacific territory.”

Chirac claimed that “without Polynesia, France would not be the great power it is, able to express in the family of nations an autonomous, independent, and respected position.”

Chirac hosts regional meeting

On July 28, the last day of his visit to French Polynesia, Chirac hosted a one-day meeting of heads of state in Oceania. A range of governments from impoverished South Pacific island states to imperialist New Zealand were represented. Only the governments of Australia and Tonga stayed away.

“France is determined to step up its efforts to promote the development of the entire region,” Chirac said. “We have a shared responsibility to respond in order to thwart the emergence of conditions that breed...instability.”

Earlier in July the governments of Australia and New Zealand, the two imperialist powers located in Oceania, announced imminent plans to intervene in the Solomon Islands with a total of almost 1,750 military and police personnel. Smaller numbers of troops and police from South Pacific countries such as Fiji and Papua New Guinea will also be involved. The forces began landing July 24. The island chain is home to 450,000 people.

Paris, which retains more Pacific colonies than any of its imperialist rivals, was shut out of this intervention by John Howard, the Australian prime minister. Howard overruled his foreign minister, who had originally recommended that the French military be invited to contribute.

At the Papeete gathering, the French president stated that “regional organizations can often play a vital role. With that in mind, France welcomes the decision of Pacific Islands forum governments to assist the government of the Solomon Islands. But it would be a mistake to set up a regional logic in opposition to that of the United Nations,” said Chirac, whose government holds veto power in the UN Security Council.

British Airways workers resist speedup, cuts

BY JOYCE FAIRCHILD AND XERARDO ARIAS

LONDON—Unions representing check-in and sales workers at British Airways (BA) signed an agreement with the giant airline July 30, over the imposition of a swipe-card clock-in system. Under the deal, which includes a 3 percent wage hike, the bosses said they would not use the card’s introduction as a Trojan horse to bring in split shifts and annualized hours.

The agreement was signed by representatives of the Transport and General Workers’ Union (TGWU), the large industrial union Amicus, and the General, Municipal, and Boilermakers’ Union (GMB).

Concerns over the issues of shifts and hours prompted a two-day wildcat strike by the workers July 18–19, after the company threatened to immediately bring in a card-based automatic time recording system.

“A few days before the walkout, management told us they were going to introduce the new system and we had to go along with it,” said one check-in worker in an August 2 interview at London’s Heathrow airport. The BA bosses have threatened employees with disciplinary action, including sacking, if they speak publicly on the dispute.

Workers explained that the new system would allow managers to use the company’s computer network to track staff movements and attendance records.

One said, “the annualization of hours means that you wouldn’t be able to take your holiday in the peak season,” and that “you could be sent home in the middle of your shift, and be told to come back on your day off to make up the hours.”

Union members had never opposed the swipe cards in principle, said TGWU official Bill Morris, but were “determined that information gathered on the cards could not be used to undermine the terms and conditions of employees.”

GMB general secretary Kevin Curran said, “it’s a 21st century dispute where low-paid, mainly women workers stood up and demanded dignity, respect, and consultation from their employer.”

Bosses react to workers’ intransigence

The bosses reacted bitterly to the workers’ intransigent stand. One unnamed “senior source” told the London *Times* that the unionists opposed the job cuts and swipe-card system in order “to protect widespread featherbedding”—what the bosses consider to be “superfluous” jobs. The source accused the workers of “exactly the same stuff that used to go on at Fleet Street,” a reference to the newspaper industry, where workers faced mass layoffs in the “restructuring” of the newspaper industry during the 1980s.

In discussions with *Militant* reporters,

workers made it clear that defense of jobs is at the heart of the ongoing fight with BA. Fifty check-in and sales workers had been cut from each of the two shifts already, while the remaining workers have to check in and deal with more flights. One said, “many of the job cuts and cost cutting that BA wanted to implement anyway has been blamed on 9/11 and the SARS outbreak.”

On June 30 BA posted a £45 million pre-tax loss for the first quarter, compared with a £65 million profit during the same period last year. Chief Executive Roderick Eddington said, “the airline must continue to modernize. We have taken 11,000 jobs out of the business, but we still have some way to go and we must press on.” The *Telegraph* reported, “BA is on course to cut 13,000 jobs by the year end, but Mr Eddington hinted that if there was no revenue improvement, that may not be enough.”

Meanwhile, TGWU members who work at Swissport, a ground handling company at Heathrow, are set to vote on whether to strike over new criteria that the company has imposed in order to cut jobs. Under the new system, workers at Swissport can be sacked based upon the number of disciplinary, sick, and late days they have amassed, as well as the bosses’ assessment of their “flexibility,” “cooperation with management,” and “ability to change.”